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WORFIELD
AND ITS TOWNSHIPS:

BEING

A HISTORY OF THE PARISH

FROM SAXON AND NORMAN TIMES,

AND INCLUDING

NOTICES OF OLD FAMILIES, AND DOCUMENTS

CONTAINED IN THE PARISH CHESTS.

By JOHN RANDALL,

Author of "The Severn Valley," "Old Sports and Sportsmen," "Life of John Wilkinson," "Life of Rev. J. W. Fletcher," "Guide to Bridgnorth," "Guide to Wenlock," etc.

May be had of the Author, J. Randall, Post Office, Madeley, or of Mrs. Cannon, Post Office, Worfield.

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TO THE READER.

The reasons which induced me to undertake this little work on Worfield were ; first, because, having written a series of articles on Worfield and its Townships in the *Wellington Journal* friends expressed a wish to see them republished in a condensed and portable form ; and, secondly because the places themselves have for years so pleasantly impressed themselves on my mind that I feel a pleasure in reproducing them. The late vicar interested himself in collecting facts and noting down events relative to the parish with a view to their publication, but death put an end to the project, so far as he was concerned. His widow, the late Mrs. Broadbent, feeling it to be her melancholy duty to carry out the wishes of her late husband, instituted inquiries and collected information with a view of arranging and preparing the whole for the press: but finding the task too great, the Rev. S. B. James, M.A., Vicar of Northmarston, was applied to and induced to undertake the work ; the only objections to which are that it was published at the high price of 10/- ; and was also deficient in information which could only be obtained by one living near, and making repeated enquiries and investigations. Why Mr. Broadbent did not make more use of the contents of the two old chests which stand in the church, and contain documents essential to a history of Worfield and its townships, or how, as the present vicar remarked to me, the author of "a History of Worfield " could have overlooked them, it is difficult to understand. The chests themselves are conspicuous objects, near to the Bromley monuments ; they are from five to six feet in length, and proportionately wide and deep, curiosities in themselves, having the appearance of having come down from a high antiquity. If he did see them, how he could have restrained his curiosity to have them opened I cannot imagine. They are as old, I should think, as the oldest document they contain. Mr. James's book appeared just ten years ago ; but these chests have not been opened, I am told by the Churchwardens, for twenty years past. This I can readily believe, for the keys were so rusty, and the locks also, that it took us an hour to unlock one. We did not succeed however in opening the second chest till some months afterwards, when I obtained the

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assistance of the smith, Mr. John Turner, of Hallon, who had to take off the hinges to get it open. I had this chest carried into the "Reading Room;" and having made an appointment with the Rev. T. Mayo to be present, we, with the consent of the vicar, took out the contents, which were in a dirty, damp, and disorderly condition, and conveyed them to that gentleman's residence at Bromley, to be assorted, cleaned, and put in better order for preservation in future. I regret however that I have not been able to avail myself of any of these documents in time for this publication, in consequence of the difficulty of obtaining translations of such "a multitudinous mass," as Mr. Mayo terms them, and I leave with regret this rich mine for some more fortunate explorer, when, as Mr. Stanley Leighton, M.P. in his admirable paper "on the preservation of ancient monuments" seems to suggest, there shall, as there ought to be, either in connection with the county, or our Shropshire Archæological Society some adept in these matters appointed. Mr. Leighton remarks:— "In these days of unlimited educational progress there are very few people, even amongst those eligible young men who profess to be desirous of turning their brains to anything, who can read a manuscript two hundred years old. There are still fewer who are acquainted with the different hand-writings of the earlier periods. I have often thought that we ought to have attached to this society a reader of ancient manuscripts whom we could recommend to any person desirous of having the manuscripts in his possession calendared. I fear there is not in this county of Salop any such professional person."

Only 400 copies of this work have been printed, nearly the whole of which are subscribed for, at 1/- each; to others the price of the book will be 1/3. These may be had of the author, J. Randall, Post Office, Madeley, or of Mrs. Cannon, Post Office, Worfield.

Madeley, October, 1887.

Worfield and its Townships.

CHAPTER I.

First impressions of Worfield—Worfield in Saxon and Norman times—A Royal Manor—Early Lords: Leofric, Algar, Hugh Montgomery, the rebellious Earl Robert, and others down to the Whitmores and their successor, the present Squire of Apley.

MY first impressions of Worfield were published nearly a quarter of a century ago, and having been thought worthy of quotation by Mr. James in his book, they might be reproduced here. I then said "Worfield, is one of the prettiest villages the Midland Counties boast, and its church is a fine specimen of the style of Architecture current during one of the most interesting periods of our history. The village is the centre of a cluster of out-lying townships and hamlets, each as primitive and rural as itself. It stands on the river Worfe, on the verge of what in Norman times was called Morfe Forest. Its population and that of its townships have remained stationary, and the occupations followed are pretty much the same as those which engaged the attention of the villagers a thousand years ago. The lofty spire of Worfield church is a landmark well known to travellers by the high road from Wolverhampton to Bridgnorth, and to those who have driven along the wide sandy lanes within some miles of it. It shows where the village stands amid the trees; it marks too the spot where a christian fane was raised when human habitations began to rise amid the darkness of surrounding woods, and men inured to the extremes of cold and hunger came forth to rear among heathen settlers a house of prayer." The little river Worfe wandered then at its own free will along the vale, making sweet music at its fords, where soon it was to be imprisoned, and made to do duty at mills erected along its course

The Romans, when masters of the island, left memorials of their presence in the parish; the Danes, like locusts, swept across it, eating up all before them. If any remained, they soon gave up, we may suppose, their marauding habits, settled down to the more peaceful pursuits of agriculture, and assimilated themselves with their more peaceable Saxon neighbours. When the Normans came it was already a flourishing Manor of considerable dimensions, held by Algar; but it no doubt had previously been held by earl Leofric, who at the instigation of his good wife Godiva (of Coventry notoriety) re-erected the Monastery of St. Milburgh, which the Danes had burnt and pillaged; and he it was, in all probability, to whom our hardy forefathers were indebted for this church in the wilderness. When Algar succeeded sad times ensued, for war between him and Harold, son of Godwin, raged, and much land was desolated and laid waste.

Still, notwithstanding the troubles intervening between this and the Norman Conquest, by draining, cutting down trees, and bringing good land into cultivation, the value of the manor had risen when King William's Commissioners came here six-fold, hence they drew quite a lively picture of the place. "Here," they say, "are XXX hides, and arable land sufficient for XXX ox-teams: In demesne are IIII teams; and V serfs; and LXVII villeins, with a priest; and X Boors have XXV teams. Here are III Mills of 40s., annual value, and a Fishery of 15s. annual value, and XVI acres of Meadow. There is a wood of 3 leagues long and 1 league wide." "Here," they add, "III English have V teams with XVIII villeins, and V Boors." By specifying English it would appear that there were persons of other nations among the population. But what a flourishing representation compared with many manors, some of which had deteriorated; it shows that, favoured by their inland position, these tillers of the soil, these cattle-drivers, swine-herds, and millers, had gone on with their work unmolested by war's alarms, that they had not suffered from fire and sword as others had done. They had a priest to watch over them, it appears, so there was sure to have been a church of some sort, although no mention is made of it till the reign of King John, who twice presented incumbents thereto.

The mills mentioned, which ground the batches to make their black bread, were those of Worfield and Rindleford on the Worfe, and one on the Mert, which runs through Badger dingle, afterwards called Badger Mill.

Wind and water being the only motive forces known, mills were valuable properties, and brought good revenues to their proprietors, Lords of the Manor, because every one was compelled to grind at them. At the time the survey was taken the Norman earl Hugh Montgomery held it of the King. Then came his brother, Robert de Belesme, who took part in the rebellion of the time, and, being outlawed, fled to the banks of the Severn, and converted the frowning cliff which overhangs Underhill Street, Bridgnorth, into a fortress, by which to shield himself from the wrath of his royal master. The rebellious earl was vanquished and imprisoned, (1102), and Worfield with his other manors forfeited to King Henry I. It then came into the hands of King Henry II, and thenceforth was accounted an ancient demesne of the Crown. It was held in demesne by Henry II, and Richard I; but in the reign of John a dispute arose as to the right of possession, and a heavy charge was laid upon it. It then came into the hands of Meurich, son of Roger de Powis who, excepting so far as he may have been disturbed by the counter-claim of Fitz Warin, held it throughout the reign of Richard I. It next came to Wrenoch and Wenhunwin, sons of Meurich; but about the year 1224, Wrenoch de Powis by some means lost his interest in Worfield, and the whole manor, that is the King's *ancient demesne*, passed to a subject, the first Henry de Hastings, by Ada his wife, through Ranulph, the last of that name, earl of Chester. He died the 34th of this reign, leaving Henry, his son and heir. Being in his minority he became ward of the king's half brother, who passed him over to William de Cantelupe. He was summoned (44th of this reign) with other nobility to attend at Shrewsbury, well furnished with horse and arms, to march against Llewellyn; but being seduced by the earl of Leicester to take part with the barons, he was excommunicated, and although he held out stoutly after the battle of Evesham at Kenilworth Castle, he afterwards surrendered on honourable terms. His son, John de Hastings, became Lord

Bergavenny, and it was during his tenure that the King, Edward the first, granted a Charter, conferring various privileges on dwellers within the manor, which will be noticed shortly. In 1274, Worfield was held by the earl of Cornwall, (Edmund Plantagenet) the king's cousin. In October, 1283, the king ordered a valuation to be made of Worfield, when the Jurors reported the rents to amount to £37 12s. 6d., the pleas and perquisities of the Manorial Court to be £6, and the gross value of the manor, made up of these and smaller items, to be £44 9s. 10d., per annum. John died 6th, Edward II., 1313 and John, Lord Hastings Bergavenny, eldest son of the last lord, became lord of the manor, and dying, 18th of Edward II., 1325, Worfield was assigned to his widow, Julian, who took the manor to a second husband, Thomas le Blount, in 1325-6; and to a third husband, William de Clinton, afterwards earl of Huntingdon, in 1329. She died 1348, and was succeeded by John, who was Lord Hastings Bergavenny and Earl of Pembroke, only child by Agnes, daughter of the famous Roger Mortimer, Earl of March. He was succeeded by his son John, who was the seventh lord, and who was followed by Reginald lord Grey of Ruthyn, through marriage with the Greys. The manor was then sold to Sir William Beauchamp, lord Bergavenny, fourth son of Thomas 12th, earl of Warwick, who died May 8th, 12th of Henry IV, 1412, and was succeeded by Richard Beauchamp, whose only child Elizabeth Beauchamp, next became lady of the manor, and married Sir Edward Nevill, son of the earl of Westmorland. She died in 1448, and he 18th of October, 16th of Edward IV, 1477. Six more of the Nevills succeeded as lords; when the sixth, and last lord, Henry de Nevill, sold the manor to Sir William Whitmore of Apley, Bart., who died, and was buried at Stockton, 14th of December, 1648. Sir Thomas Whitmore of Apley, whose mother was a daughter of John Weld of Willey, succeeded. He died, and was buried at Stockton 18th of May, 1653. The Whitmores continued, as is well known, to hold the lordship till the time of the sale of the Apley estate by the present Captain Whitmore, son of the late Thomas Charlton Whitmore, 25th lord, to William Orme Foster Esq., the present lord of the manor.

CHAPTER II.

Royal Charter—Copyholders' and Lord of the Manor's Agreement—Ancient customs to be observed and enforced—Demesne and other Courts—A delinquent Reeve—Presentments—Constables and their Accounts—Some curious Items.

IN a manor of royal demesne, and one privileged with such a succession of distinguished nobles as lords, one naturally expects to find favours conferred by way of charters, grants, or other privileges. The first and most important charter is one by King Edward I, "to the inhabitants of Worfield," dated 1287. This charter is supposed to be in a small round box in one of the large oak and iron-bound chests now at the west end of the Church, opposite the Bromley monuments; wherein also are contained other important and highly interesting documents, tending to elucidate the history of the parish and its townships. Here is a copy carefully made from the original: first, *verbatum et literatum*; secondly translated into Latin as now written: and thirdly into English. And as it is not of great length it may as well be given here.

Edward by the grace of God, King of England and France and Lord of Ireland. To all and singular Justices, Sheriffs, Bailiffs, Officers, and all his faithful subjects, as well within Liberties as without, to whom these present Letters shall come Greeting. Whereas according to a custom in our Kingdom of England hitherto used and approved, Men of ancient demesne of the Crown of England would have been free and they must be from the payment of Tolls and also from the expences of Knights coming to our Parliaments. And also that they shall have all customs from ancient usage and that they shall not be put on Assize Juries or any recognizances for their lands or tenements which are of the said ancient demesne of the Crown of England through our whole kingdom aforesaid. We command ye that the men and tenants of the manor of Wolversford, otherwise called Worfeld, which is of ancient demesne of the Crown of England, may be by a certain certificate to us in our Chancery by our Treasurers Chamberlain according to our mandate certified and upon the Files of our Chancery aforesaid placed fully appears concerning such payment of Tolls and the expenses of Knights and also of such Assize Juries or any Recognizances and also the customs above mentioned ye may permit to be free according to the custom above mentioned. And the distresses if any on these men on the account aforesaid ye shall have levied the same to them without delay ye shall release. In

Witness whereof we have caused these our Letters to be made patent. Witness ourself at Westminster, the 26th day of May, in the sixteenth year of our Reign. 1287. Frystow.

It has various endorsements, and the inhabitants paid money at different times and in different places to get it enrolled; once at Shrewsbury, when King Henry VIII was there; once at Albrighton; in 1592 at Shifnal; and again at Westminster, in Queen Anne's reign, before Sir Edward Ward, Lord Chief Baron. The next important document extant in point both of matter and date appears to be an agreement between the copyholders of the manor of Worfield and lord William Beauchamp, earl of Worcester, and lord of the said manor, for a confirmation of their customs as recorded on the Court Rolls of the manor. This too has been translated from the original Latin by the same learned and indefatigable antiquary, Mr. William Hardwicke, and has been placed at my disposal. It is as follows:—

"Worfeld to wit. The Great Court held there on Wednesday, the feast of St. Mark the Evangelist, in the fourth year of the reign of King Henry the Fourth after the Conquest. At this court all the tenants of base tenure within this manor of Worfeld with one free will and consent gave and granted to Lord William Beauchamp to have his favourable rule, sixty six pounds 13s. and 4d. sterling to be paid in this manner which follows—to wit, on the Feast of St. Michael the Archangel next coming after the date of this court, £22 4s. 6d., and on the Feast of St. Michael the Archangel the next following, £22 4s. 6d., and on the Feast of St. Michael the Archangel then next following, £22 4s. 6d. And for this donation the lord hath granted to his tenants aforesaid that they may have and hold all their lands and tenements which they now hold in peace from the beginning of the world until this court, without disturbance or expulsion of the lord or his councel, saving the right of every one. And that all the tenants henceforth shall have and hold all their lands and tenements according to the form of a certain customary to be made to the said tenants by the lord and his councel and to be sealed with the seal of the arms of the lord. And for the aforesaid payments well and faithfully to be made at the feast aforesaid, the aforesaid tenants bind themselves and every of them with their heirs and executors, their lands and tenements and all their goods."

The *Customary* alluded to in the above appeared the year following, 4th of June, 5th of Henry IV, 1403, having these Arms attached:—On a fesse between six crosses crosslet—a crescent. It is too long to give in extenso, but as it contains provisions touching the relations between the lord and his tenants, a brief summary may be given.

It commences with allusions to "well proved altercaycions and discencyons" between officers and tenants of base tenure; and to remove "ambeguities and obscurities in tyme to come," proceeds to specify services required and privileges granted; which are to be enforced by the lord's court, in conformity with ancient custom and usage. It provides that no tenant be removed from his holding but by due process of court; also that no tenant shall "grynd elsewhere but at our mylles:" providing the measure be lawful; and for the punishment of the "mylner" upon three trespasses if not so. Another important provision was the election annually of a provost and a beadle; and the reservation that there might be various other customs and usuages not declared in these letters patent which it was not intended to disapprove, but to affirm and sustain according to right and reason.

It must not be supposed that this was the first establishment of a corporate body; the earl did not profess to create, but to confirm and regulate, certain civil rights and privileges already existing. It is found, for instance, that about a century and a half before, or in 1256, "Reginald de Bromley appeared as bailiff of Wurfeld," at the assizes of 1256; and that he was accompanied by twelve jurors, whose names are given as under:—Laurence de Oldinton (Oldington), William de Swancote, Willlam de Halvescote (Allscott), William de Hodileg, William de Irrys (Irish), Adam de Alen (Hallon), William de Hulton (Hilton), Thomas Griffin, Roger de Bremplee (perhaps Bentley), William de Oldinton, Thomas de Akinton (Ackleton), and Robert de Atterhull.

That Bailiff answered to Provost is shown a few years later, when at the assizes of September, 1272, the chief Bailiff or Provost of Worfield is mentioned, and his eleven other jurors. The chief Bailiff on that occasion was Robert de Stapelford, (Stableford). His eleven associates were—Stephen de Ewyken (Wyken), William de Rowelawe (Rowley), William de Bradeneye (Bradney), Roger de Cheterton (Chesterton), Boneyt and Thomas de Stanlowe (Stanlow), Roger de Akelinton (Ackleton), William Gerbaut (probably of Roughton), William Atte-Forde, Robert de Hoccomb (Hoccom), and Richard de Alvescote (Alscote).

These jurors, of course, represented their different townships ; the manor soon after the conquest having contained several hamlets, bearing pretty much the names they now do. There were more dwellers probably in the townships and hamlets then than now; one writer has gone so far as to say that the population of the parish was five times greater. At any rate, the land was in more hands. Besides being divided into smaller manors, as in some few instances, it was subdivided into two yard lands, or (about 100 acres); into yard-lands (50 acres) ; into half-yard lands of 25 acres ; and into nooks, and half nooks and quarters.

A tenant admitted to yard land paid twenty shillings to the lord of the manor, and three shillings to the steward for his fee. Every yard land also paid six shillings and eight pence as a chief rent per annum to the lord of the manor. At the decease of every copyholder, for every messuage and toft he died seized of a heriot, being the best good ox beast, had to be paid to the lord of the manor. The affairs of the Demesne Court, next to the chief bailiff and steward, who represented the owner of the manor, was the reeve, whose duties consisted in collecting the lord's rents, fines, heriots etc ; two constables; two ale-tasters, to attend taverns and look after the brewings of beer, and a beadle or crier, who acted as under bailiff, for the purpose of serving and executing all processes of the Court. The right of election of the crier had been for ages, it is said, the privilege of the inhabitants of the township of Hallon.

The Demesne Court had great power, it adjudicated on all crime except high treason. In 1326, when Thomas Boydan was steward to John de Hastings, lord of the manor, 3rd and 4th Edward III, and Walter de Kingslowe and Joan his wife were arraigned for felony, and found guilty, the steward passed sentence of death, and he was hung ; whilst his widow was imprisoned in Shrewsbury jail, where she died. It will be found as we proceed that the decisions of these courts were founded on custom and usage rather than law.

At the request of the copyholders these customs were confirmed by William Beauchamp, chief lord, in 1403 ; a favour deemed so great that they paid him during the three following years the sum of

£66 13s. 4d; to William Gatacre, of Gatacre, who was then steward, a gallon of wine, which cost 20d., for setting his hand thereto. They relate chiefly to the sums payable on taking, surrendering, or transferring messuages or land, settling them on a survivor, and to the rents to be paid for them. One tells us that "no married woman that is a copyholder or holds by jointure, can surrender any copyhold estate till she is first examined by the steward, for which examination his fee is two shillings." Another, the eighteenth, is recorded thus: "And as for our Court, notice be given to the Steward that he ought to keep a three week's Court as a Court Baron, but if any person requires a Court to be held in a shorter time, it is called a purchase Court, for which, the Steward must have six shillings for every admittance, sixpence for every copy he makes on parchment, and what is done then ought to be declared to the Homage the next Court Baron." I have a "Copy of customes of the manor of Worfield under the hand of Robert Barrett, Gentleman, a copyholder of the manor." The compiler was christened at Worfield in 1640; he was descended from an old family living at Alscote, and was steward to the Davenport family. They are forty-one in number, and would occupy too much space to transcribe.

Some officers of the Court were dishonest. An entry on the rolls, of 7th of Henry IV, tells with great verbosity how one "Thomas Jankeys, late reeve of the lord, put himself under the lord's favour because that whilst the said Thomas was reeve, and had the custody of the bag, and rolls of court in the same, under the seal of Henry Dunfowe, clerk of the lord of Worfield, sealed, the same Thomas fraudulently and without the notice of the steward, the clerk, or any other of the lord's council, unsealed and opened the aforesaid bag and the rolls of the lord's Court, drew out and took and made, in fact, false entries, and received fines he did not account for." By putting himself *under the favour of the lord*, is meant, it may be supposed, putting himself at his mercy, to be dealt with as his lord should think fit.

I have, too, a long list of presentments, or in other words, the charges and official notices of breaches of customs, and of law,

extracted from the originals in one of the chests in the Church, previously alluded to. The following are some of them.

First of Edward III, (1327). "Margery, wife of William Edith of Kingslowe, gave to the lord of the manor 12d. for a consideration of Court to ascertain what estate she would have after the decease of her husband in the tenement he granted to Robert the son of Thomas de Ewyke."

Fourth of Edward III, (1331). "William Hugyn paid to the lord 10s. as a fine, to have Margery de Kingslowe, the widow of William Edith, to wife, with her lands, to wit, 1 messuage and 2 yard-lands."

Twentieth of Richard II, (1397). Comparative prices of oxen and hawks. "Roger de Kingslowe was presented to have died seized of 4 messuages and six nooks and a half of land in Kingslowe, where the lord had 4 oxen, viz., one red, value 8s., one bison, 8s., one black, 7s., and one hawke value 7s."

Seventh of Henry VI, (1429). "Kingslowe and Stanslowe townships presented that Thomas Jenkys forestalled Matilda Gyldon and from her unjustly took 1d——of the value of 6d. of the goods and chattels of the said Matilda, and he is amerced. They also present that the same Thomas made an assault upon the said Matilda and struck her, contrary to the peace of the King. It was also presented that the said Matilda had levied her men upon the aforesaid Thomas justly, and he was amerced." In the same year Matilda herself was presented for marrying herself to John Blakemore without the lord's license, and fined.

Forestalling was an offence frequently brought before the Court.

Twelfth of Henry IV. "Akylton township present that Roger Dalileie forestalled Thomas Tomkys, therefore he was amerced. And that Stephen Draper and two others made an "Homsokon" upon Roger Dalileie, and were amerced as well for forestalling and assaulting the said Roger. And say that Simon Broke made a *purpresture* upon a certain footway unjustly to the nuisance of the people of Akylton. And say that Richard Heth of Heth near Baggesoore (Badger) and others were within this lordship attempting to kill."

Sixteenth of Edward IV. "Kingslowe and Stanlowe townships present that William Barret Tailor forestalled upon the common highway John Gyldon and struck him. And that Thomas Acton forestalled upon the highway Thomas Dally and struck him with arrows and drew blood. And that Joan Gyldon made an outcry."

Many offences are recorded for trespass of cattle, for breaking open pounds and liberating cattle, for marking other's sheep as their own, for illegal fishing, etc., etc.

The office of constable was an important one. Burns says: "By the statute of Winchester, In every hundred and franchise two constables shall be chosen to make the view of armour; and they shall present defaults of armour, and of suits of towns, and of highways, and such as lodge strangers in uplandish towns, for whom they will not answer: Thirteenth of Edward I." They seem to have been chosen from a better class of men than the "Old Charleys" of the beginning of this century, or even than that from which their representatives, our modern police, are drafted. You find by their names that they were of the families of yeomen of the time. They appear to have been appointed for different parts of the parish; as for the "east side," the "west side," and so on. They appear to have been armed, and to have had charge of the armour served out to others, in the village and in the townships. The accounts they kept are preserved in the old chests in the church, and are headed "Constable's Accounts." Here are some of them:—

Finding a taper for "our Ladye;" and "Rental of the glorious Virgin Mary of Worfield." Also (1511) receipts for "viiid. for the sowle of Mary Warton," and "xxd do. for Jona Pryse." Also payments for "moldywarps and crows, for urchins, rats, myse, for foxe heads, otters, etc." Also (1555) for "iron pegge to set the holy water potte upon;" "to the scolemast. for wages iii lbs."

1590 Paid for two sword gerdles ijs. iiijd.
,, ,, one sword iiijs.
1591 ,, ,, two head peeces viijs. iiijd.
Item for 6 swords and 6 daggers xxvijs. vjd.

Item for two pykes iijs. vijd.
Item for 3 arrowes and the heads iiijd.
Item for pointing a sword 1d.
Item for a black byll and the halme xxd.
Item for 3 ribetts and two buckles ijd.

1597 Item paid for two daggers xiiijd.
,, sheathes, locks and clasps for them xviijd.
,, for halfe a costlet xvjs.
,, for halfe a pike xxd.
,, the guiltinge and fringing of syxe head peeces xs.

1601 Item to George the Furburrer for scouringe, dressing and amending the Armour of the Pi'she iiijs.

A true note of all the Pi'she Armour delivered unto our charge by John Cuerton, and John Garbett, as followeth :—

Imprimis ij. corsletts, wanting on part of a paire of poldrons and ij. pikes, whereof one is in the keepinge of Francis Westbury. Item ij. Caluds and a muskett, one belte, iiij. flaskenes and tutchboxes, one rest for the musket, and five head peeces, wth ij. bullet bagges, iij. mouldes and ij. wormes.

Item, a bowe and a sheffe of arrowes, a skull cap, a black bill and one dagger.

Item, one sword and dagger in the keeping of Stephen Rowley, with the girdle and hanginge; and another sword and dagger, with the girdle and hanginge in the keeping of Roger Barret.

Here is another :

1603 Item,—for making the grave and burying a woman in Newton fyeld, wch. dyed we know not upon what syckness, xiid.

Item, payed for a locke that was hanged to a woman's legge in the stocke, who gate out and run away with the same.

1610 Payed for one hew and crye that came after a man in a black dublett and on a black horse, which had killed a man—2d.

1617 Payed when we had a warrant from Mr. Kinnersley to bring Mr. Davenport before him, 4d. Item, payed when we had a warrant from Mr. Corbett and Mr. Coate to bring Mr. Davenport before them to Newport, 2s. 6d.

One wonders what Mr. Davenport had done that he should be so urgently "wanted," to use a phrase now in vogue with the profession. It was about the time Master William, the heir of Chorley, was alleged to have privily "enticed and stolen away" the young heiress of Hallon, Jane Bromley; and probably her step-father, Walter Wrottesley, of Wrottesley, had commenced those judicial proceedings which ended in a Chancery Suit, lasting over a series of years.

There are also payments accounted for about the same time for bringing "trayned men" to show their armour at Wenlock; also for "a sheete of parchment to make a rolle to put in all the able men's names in the parish above eighteen years and under fyftye;" and for "watching two rogues all night, and for whippinge them 1s. 3d." Another item is as follows: "Payd out at Bridgnorth when we brought the alemen before the justices to be bounde that they should not dresse nor eat any flesh in their houses in the tyme of Lent."

CHAPTER III.

The feudal system in full vigour—Divine right claimed for the decisions of the Court.—"The new Vicarage."—"Peter's Well."

THESE extracts of records taken from the court and other rolls shew the old feudal system in full vigour. It came to the aid of the church in enforcing fasts; it exercised its power over the persons of the tenants, their lands, messuages and moveables, their marriages and deaths. It cast a complete net over the whole population, the meshes of which caught every one and bound them fast at the will of their lord. Every one was compelled to pay homage at the Court; to attend and be sworn into frank-pledge; that is to be mutually bound for each other's good conduct, or otherwise be subject to a fine which went to the lord's use. These Courts appear to have had plenty to do. Their proceedings are recorded on rolls, which are tied up like bundles of faggots, and deposited in the old chests in the church. They show how the small yeomen, copy-holders, and farmers, living on the borders of manors and of two counties, quarrelled, stole one anothers cattle, broke down each others fences, and trespassed on their lands; also how, when cattle were impounded they tore down the palings of the pinfold and liberated them. The ale-tasters and others went round to taverns and private houses to see who brewed contrary to the assize, and we read of no end of fines for such offences; sometimes it is a penny, sometimes twopence, sometimes one hen, at others two, or perhaps a sheep. It may raise a smile to find these petty arbiters of other's actions, claiming divine authority for their decisions; but a dirty scrap of parchment rescued from destruction, in cleaning out one of the church chests, shows this to have been so. Great difficulty was experienced in the translation, but my friend Hubert Smith, Esq., town clerk of Bridgnorth, who has had no little experience in that way, with the assistance of a friend, has succeeded, first by writing out at full the

contracted Latin words, and then rendering these into English, as follows:—

"Worfield. Extract of sentence of the Court there held on the Wednesday next after Epiphany in the thirteenth year of our Divine King Edward IV, King of England, (1474).

Thomas Swancote for default of Court.—2d.

Jeffrey Lloit for the same cause,—2d.

John Byllingesley the younger who refused submission in Court to John Barrett, arrow maker in *Parliament*,—6d.

Wittus Gulden who transgressed by disobeying the above mentioned John, arrow maker in *Parliament*,—6d."

"Thomas Barker and John Devet, for making an affray and disturbance of the peace, being disturbers of the peace of their Divine King, with force and arms, that is with dagger and club, are condemned by our decree in full Court here assembled in the presence of all kinsmen and strangers for contempt of our divine King and his divine dominion, no small or light offence.—Moreover as soon as the said Thomas had made his affray and disturbance, he withdrew and fled and refused to surrender to our constables warrant and our divine Decree, so is condemned as an example to all ungovernable rioters and disturbers of the peace of our divine King, and his divine dominion.—Wherefore the said Thomas is fined twenty shillings, and the said John, six shillings and eightpence. By our decree and sentence the above shall be free from indemnity, if they surrender and submit to our next great Court.—Total, 28 shillings, Costs, Sixpence."

It will be seen that "parliament" is given in Italics, the interpretation being doubtful. The word "Homsokon" occurs more than once, but its meaning is not clear. Arrow-making appears to have been a profession at that time, 1474.

Copied from other papers in a chest in Worfield Church.

"1594 Hilary term 37th Elizabeth, 1594, 12th February. Salop. Whereas one Hughe Sotherne, Gen., havinge p'cured a lease under the seale of this court, bearinge date in September, in the thirtyth yeare of Her Highnes' Reigne, for the terme of

xxi. years, of the whole Forest of Morff, in the County of Salop, and of the Wood, and herbage thereof, at the yerely rent of fourtye shillings, to the greevance and great wrong of divers Her Ma'ties subjects, inhabitants in and neare unto the said Forest to the nomber of fyftye and two Townshipps. And whereas also the sayd Sotherne by his deede, bearing date the xxxth daye of Maye, in the two and xxxth yere of Her Ma'ties Reigne, assigned, and sett over the said lease, and all his tearme to come, in the said Forest, unto Edward Bromley, Esq. Whereupon divers of the said Inhabitants in the name of the whole multitude of the said Inhabitants of the said Townshippes, exhibited their . . . . the bill of . . . unto this court for reformac'on of the said greevance and . . . wronge. Whereupon a . . . . . comission was awarded out of this court to examine witnesses . . . . . of the said comission was . . . executed . . . . . Sotherne have delivered up and surrendered as well the said lease and assignment thereof, as also the . . . . right and title in and to the same Forest, to Her Ma'ty to be cancelled. It is now ordered by this Court the same lease and assignment, and all things therein conteyned be revoked and from henceforth by this order frustrated, and made voyde to all intents and purposes.

The originall of this coppye remayneth kept in the stove in the Vesterey at Claverley."

Rather an unlikely place, one would think, to keep an important document like this, on which depended the rights and privileges of so many townships. Probably the translator, my late friend, Mr. Sidney Stedman Smith, of Burcote, made a slip. The document however shows that the inhabitants had spirit to stand up for their rights and privileges.

These consisted in the right to use the commons, and the right of common pasture, granted in the reign of Henry IV. The Henry Bromley mentioned above was he to whom one of the monuments in the Church was erected to. His ancestors had had charge of that portion bordering on Worfield for many years. They succeeded the

Gorbods or Gilberts who appear to have been Normans, the first of whom was appointed by Henry I. The office was hereditary, and it came to the Bromleys through Alice, sole heir of Gilbert, who married Robert Bromley. But for Henry, mentioned on last line but three of last page, read Edward. I shall have occasion to refer to the Bromleys again, but it is important to notice this early mention of the family as connected with the forest, because it takes us back to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and tends to show that the family of which the Lord Chancellor was a member was originally of Worfield, and not of Bromley in Staffordshire, as some writers allege.

The following short document relates to the carriage of wheat from Bewdley to Ludlow Castle, at the time the latter was in its glory, as a residence of the Lords Marchers, and when Henry, earl of Pembroke, who succeeded Sir Henry Sidney, was president, and is as follows:—

1597 "Be hyt knowen that I, Richard Pingle, purveyor, have received and had of the Constables, of Worvyld Home, the sum of xxiijs. iiijd., for the caraig of ij. waggons of wheat from Bewdley unto the Castle, of Ludlowe, and this shall be your discharge for the payment hereof, this xxth of Maye, 1597.

By me, Richard Pingle, Purveyor."

The following account of a lease of property in Bridgnorth might be interesting.

1603 "11th James 1st, March 18th. By Indenture of this dated between Thos. Bradburne, and Thomas Beeche, of the par. of Worfield Co. Salop, Yeomen, on the one part and John Pears, of Bridgnorth, Mercer, on the other part. Thos. Bradburne, and Thos. Beeche, (with the consent of the parishioners) in cons'ion of £7 10s. 0d. paid to them by John Pears, for the use of the said parishioners, in the name of a fine, lease to John Pears "all that one house or kitchen containing one bay of buildings or more, and the cave and backside thereunto adjoining, also one garden or parcel of ground unto the same house or kitchen belonging, situate and lying in Bridgnorth, in a place called

"Underhill," and the garden adjoining to the "Ryvoure of Seaverne" on the East part and on the West part, to a common leading from Bridgnorth towards "Yeardington." On the North to the lands of John Smythe, Esquire, and on the South adjoining to the lands belonging to the late "dissolved chantery of Saynte Leonards, in Bridgnorth." All which said primises are in the occupation of the said John Pears or his undertenants to hold the same from the date of this Indenture during the lives of said John Pears, William Pears, and John Pearce, and during the life of the longest liver of them, paying yearly during the said term the sum of four shillings, Signed, John Pears, Williams Pears, John Pearce.

Witnessed by Humphry Synge, Rowland Pearce, John Benthall.

As this is the only instance in which I meet with the name of Benthall, I may say that he married Joyce, daughter of George Forster, of Evelith, by his wife Elizabeth, daughter of Robert Morton by his wife Cecilia, daughter of William Charlton, of Apley Castle. He succeeded his brother Lawrence to the lordship of Benthall; that gentleman having just lost his son and heir Edward, who had, shortly before, buried his wife Ann, daughter of Thomas Astley of Patteshull, and his only child. The name of that child was George. He died an infant. The successor to John was Lawrence (ii.,) a sufferer for his adherence to King Charles I., for whom he was a commissioner of array; his eldest son Cassey was taken prisoner by the parliamentary party at Shrewsbury and was afterwards killed at Stow-in-the-Wold, being in that fight a Colonel in Sir Jacob Astley's force.

Here is another, which may also prove interesting to dwellers in Worfield.

1618 "16th James 1st, May 1st, Thomas Beach, of Alscott, par. Worfield, Yeoman."

"With the consent of the parishioners of Worfield in consideration of £6 paid to him for the use of the parishioners in the name of a fine leased to William Barney, of Worfield, Yeoman, one house or tenement containing three bayes of building or

thereabouts, with the backside, close and garden thereunto adjoining, lying and being in Worfield, adjoining to the parson's pale (so called) on the East part, and on the West to the common street leading from Roughton towards the Church of Worfield, and on the North to the *new parsonage*, lately erected, and on the South adjoining to the Mill Lane End, to hold the same for fourscore and nineteen years if the said Wm. Barney, Joseph Barney his son, and Mary Barney his daughter, or any one of them who shall so long live, paying yearly the sum of ten shillings and also twelve pence yearly to the Chief Lord of the fee."

It would seem from the above that the dreary looking building next to the present vicarage was at that time the "new parsonage." One would imagine it to have been older, looking at its bulging walls and slouching roof, and the state of the floors inside. No wonder the parson was glad to remove into "Worfield House" adjoining it. It is now made into two cottages, one of which is untenanted,—excepting by pigs and poultry: and the other, I should imagine, will soon be to let. And now I think of it, by the by, these old walls cannot be supposed to have been unfamiliar with such sounds, seeing that the tithe barn stood close by, and that in former times, Easter offerings and tithes were given in kind. There must have been a tolerable grunting, and bleating, and cackling hereabouts. The building is more like a barn than a house, and probably was designed to store, in some part of it, if not the tithe of hemp and flax, that of fruit, of apples and pears, etc.

What a humorous chronological account this old parsonage might give of itself, and of the domestic and inner life of its clerical occupiers, if interrogated by the light of departed customs and local records! Sooner or later it must get out of the way of improvement and disappear. It is of no use, excepting as a subject for an artist's sketch: to him its bulging half-timbered walls and slouching roof, its weather-stains, and mosses, would be as pleasing as the delicate blue on peach or plum, or the virgin bloom on a maiden's cheek. Before it falls, or is swept away, it would be well if a sketch could be

taken, or at least a photo, to hang up in the Reading Room, which is held in a still more ancient building of lath and plaster, and half timber walls, by the lich-gate, opposite.

The following deed of the 18th James 1st, is incidentally interesting from its mention of the spring called Peter's Well, and as settling the debated question whether it was so called after Peter the apostle, or some Peter of lesser distinction. Mr. James, quoting a correspondent, seems to incline to the latter opinion; but here, it will be seen, in 1618, it is distinctly described as Saint Peter's Well, within inverted commas, showing that the writer quoted the name by which it was known at that time. The deed is of the above date, and in it the churchwardens of Worfield lease to John Barret "that house, tenement or cottage, with the building, caves, backsides, orchards and gardens thereunto belonging, situate in Worfield, and two pieces of waste land containing half an acre lying in Worfield—the one of them lying on the West side of the common lane leading from Worfield to a field called Masserdine field, and extendeth to or near a spring of water or well called 'Saint Peter's Well,'" &c.

CHAPTER IV.

Was Saint Peter or Saint Matthew the patron Saint of the Church?—The Church robbed of more than half its income and reduced to a Vicarage—The Bishop's Endowment in 1394—The Terriers.

THE quotation of a deed in which "Saint Peter's Well" is mentioned, goes far to show that it was the apostle, after whom the spring was called, and not any less dignified Peter. This admitted, the question arises, did the well take its name from the church or the church its name from the well? In olden times springs credited with curative or medicinal properties were much prized; generally too a hermit or anchorite of some sort took up his abode in a hut or cave beside it; and in course of time a cell, a monastery, or a church, would be built on or near the spot, in order to profit by the alms and offerings made for benefits received. Now here is the cell, or cave in the rock, and the spring beside it: a spring of pure cool water, famous for its good qualities, and which was known, as we have seen, as St. Peter's Well, nearly two hundred years ago.

But if Saint Peter was the patron Saint of the spring, and the church took its name therefrom, or *vice versa*, how comes it that the wake—usually the festival of the dedication of a church, was held on St. Matthew's day? The vane on the spindle at the top of the spire is a cock; but as that bird played so many parts in the legends of early ages, and is so commonly chosen for the same airy position, it may not in this case be associated with St. Peter, or aid in any way the solution of a question which I leave to others to decide.

And now that we are in the region of myths and legends, I might refer to the old stereotyped story which has a lodgement here relating to the site of the church. It is generally applied to a church at the foot of a hill or at the top. If the builders began at the bottom, it is said that the devil would not have it, and that he carried

the stones to the top; and if they began at the top, as it is here alleged, the father of mischief rolled them down, till he tired them out and gained his point.

In each of these cases tradition is loquacious where history is silent. The first Church has been spoken of as having probably been founded by the Saxons, seeing that the Domesday survey mentions a priest; but of its foundation and its founder nothing whatever is known. Its advowson was in the Crown, and did not go with the manor to the Lords Hastings; but bishop Langton, of Lichfield, obtained it from Edward II, and a Bull from Pope John XXI, dated October, 1324, confirms him in its possession. It was then a rectory; and the bishop appears to have been guilty of a little double dealing in the disposition of its revenues, for whilst professing no small concernment "for the church on account of the great cure of souls annexed thereto," he adroitly deprived it of the local benefits of its Saxon founders, in favour of the adornment, or in defrayment of the current expenses, of his pet cathedral at Lichfield.

In 1341, lay and clerical Lords were at their wit's end to know how to screw the usual amount out of their tenants, owing to "the growing corn having been destroyed by storms, in a very bad season, and a less number of sheep than formerly being in the parish; because also the small-tithes, the tithes of mills, offerings, heriots, glebe, and other profits, were not to be reckoned, it is said, as increasing the assessment; because, we are told, many tenants had quitted under stress of poverty, and their land lay untilled.

For fuller particulars I give the bishop's ordination and endowment, which was served as a legal document, soon after the church was constituted a vicarage. The date is 1394.

"Copy of the original Endowment of the Vicarage of Worfield and of a Translation thereof procured from the Consistory Court of the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry."

"To all the sons of holy-Mother Church to whom these presents shall be made known, Richard, by divine permission Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, sendeth greeting in the Saviour of all men. Be it known to all of ye by these presents that we (a legal process having been served and all the requisite forms of law having been observed) with the unanimous assent and express consent of our

beloved sons the Dean and Chapter of our Cathedral Church of Lichfield, (possessing the Parish Church of Worfield in our diocese for their own proper use) and of all others who are interested in this our Ordination, submitting themselves and all differences great and small to us, have taken into consideration, ordained and endowed a perpetual vicarage in the said Church in manner following :— First of all we will appoint and also ordain that there be a perpetual Vicar in the said Church of Worfield for the time being, and he and his successors who shall be Vicar, hereafter there shall have and perform the cure of the said Church and the Parishioners thereof, and shall serve the said Church and Parishioners diligently in divine office, and when and as often as the said Vicarage shall in future happen to become vacant, a proper person shall be presented by the said Dean and Chapter to us and our successors (the See being full) and the same being vacant to the guardian of the Spirituals, and by us our successors or such guardian to be admitted and instituted and also by the Archdeacon of the place to be canonically inducted into the same, and also that such Vicar and his successors shall have the principal place of residence and court yard with the buildings thereon erected, with the entire garden of the rectory of the Church of Worfield aforesaid, as far as the court yard which extends from the entrance of the gate of the Rectory to the water of the River running to the mill of the Lord of Worfield as the said Court is divided, for his convenient abode, and the said Vicar shall have all and singular the tythes of small crofts lying near a house, cerage (a payment to find wax candles in a church) and gardens, apples, pears, and other fruits of trees, flax, hemp, garlick, onions, and of the several mills, of hay as well tithe in money as in the fields of Kyngesmeadow and Eileshall, of fowls, of milking cows, calves, bees, geese, eggs, piggs, pigeons, and of other fowls and fisheries within the bounds and limits of the parish aforesaid. And shall moreover have all oblations as well within the parish Church of Worfield as in the Chapel of Chesterton and within the said parish in any manner offered. Also the tythes of all sorts of grain of the village of Chesterton aforesaid, and all personal tythes of workmen, artificers, and merchants of the said parish. And they shall have likewise the herbage within the churchyard of the church aforesaid, together with the trees growing in the same. And the said Dean and Chapter of our aforesaid Church of Lichfield shall have and receive the whole residue of the fruits, profitts, rights and obventions of the Church aforesaid who thereout shall repair the chancel of the said Church as often as occasion shall require at their own expense and shall bear and sustain all other burthens both ordinary and extraordinary incident to the said Church, except, nevertheless, that the Vicar and the said Vicar for the time being shall be bound to pay to us and our successors, St. Peter's Pence every year at the accustomed times.

In testimony of all these particulars, our seal as well as the common seal of our beloved sons, the Dean and Chapter of Lichfield aforesaid, is affixed to these presents,

Given and done in our manor of Heywode, the first day of the month November, in the year of our Lord, 1394, and in the ninth year of our consecration."

The bishop seems to have treated the church rather scurvily. It was a rectory ; he reduced it to a vicarage, and it suffered not only loss of dignity but of income. The *valor* of 1534-5 shows the extent

to which spoliation was carried, and that whilst the dean and chapter of Lichfield, who are called parsons of the church, received £51 per annum, from land, tithes of hay, wool, flax, etc. ; the vicar, the real parson, who was to do the work, was left with £16 10s. 10d. only! Made up as follows: house and garden, 10s.—In Easter books £6 13s. 4d.—Tithes of two mills, 14s.—Oblations of Chesterton Chapel, 11s.—Oblations of Roughton Chapel, 12s.—Corn tithes of Chesterton, £5.—Oblations of three days, which would be Easter and other great feast days, 14s.—In geese, young swine, and other small produce, £1 13s. 4d.—In candles, 2s. 2d.

In course of time differences arose as to what was, and what was not titheable, also as to the amount to be paid: then came meetings, discussions, and heart burnings. The oldest inhabitants,—*ancient men*, as they were called, men whose memories could stretch farthest back into the past, were selected to meet and confer with churchwardens and vicars to clear up obscurities, so that the vicar should have his due on the one hand, and that his flock should not be unjustly mulcted or unduly fleeced on the other. A gathering of this kind took place early in the 17th century and is given thus: "Presentment of the minister, churchwardens, tog'r w'th foure ancient men of the said parish made and delivered at the visitation holden at Penn, the...day of Sep. A Dm. 1612, touching the abutting and lymitting of land, belonging to the vicarage and holders thereof."

It is signed "Humfrie Barnes, *vicarius ;* James Abowen, Johes Hitchcocks, Churchwardens ; and Will's Beeche, Richard Bradney, and Thomas Bradburne, parishioners, or ancient men."

Here is another and a later one :—

"A Coppie of the Terrior touching the Glebe, Tythes and app'tenances of the Vicariage of Worfield as it was deliv'd into ye B'ps Registry Anno D'ni 1698."

Imprimis the Vicaridg house consisting of about two bayes and a half of building ; and a back-house of a bay and an half ; a Barne consisting of about 3 or 4 little bayes of building. All the Land (besides ye Church Yard) is that little spot where the house stands

w'ch together with the garden is scarce half an acre. This is the whole of the Glebe.

As for the tythes, there is in the village of Chesterton all grain belonging to the Vicariage: there is tythe hay in kinde in one meadow (called the Lord's meadow) in all other parts of ye p'ish there is a modus decimandi (a very small one), in some meadows a penny, in some twopence, in some sixpence is paid instead of the Hay in kind.

There is tythe of fruit (Apples, Pears,) hemp, flax paid in kinde; tythe pig and goose in kinde, and there is tithe at seven paying or allowing the halfpence under 10; and where there are under 7, the p'ishioner allowes the halfpence to the Vicar, according to each number.

For cowes and calves, our custom is to receive 1d. for every cow; and an halfpenny for a calf; the p'ishioners can sbribe (?) against the Tythe Calves in kinde at seven, but the Vicar will not allow their p'scription where they have ten calves, tho' they tender their halfpence; there is one or two farms in the p'ish from w'ch the calves in kinde have been lately paid where there hath been 10 fallen within the year.

For Easter offerings; hired servants pay 3d. in the pound according to their wages, be it more or less; all single persons pay 2d., and a man and wife 2d., ye fees of Weddings is 2s. 6d. whether by Bans or Licence: for a burial 6d.; for the churching of women 4d.; the Vicar hath also from the 2 Corne miles a pecke of corn a peece for the week by p'scription."

Another, dated 1708, called the "Terrier of glebe, tythes, etc., of the poor Vicarage of Worfield, delivered into the Bishop's Registry," gives the several amounts. It shows, like the last, that a *modus* had been introduced, or an equivalent in money, "but scarce a twentieth," it is remarked, "of the true value." A foot note states that the vicar, James Hancox, "doth not allow what is underwritten: but that we the inhabitants of the parish, do allow and agree to the above written terrier." It is signed by a number of parishioners.

The adoption of a *modus* was a step in the direction of the commutation of tithes, which put an end, in a great measure, to the bickerings and heartburnings arising out of payments in kind. Tythes were of three kinds, *Prœdial*, such as arise immediately from the ground, as grain of all sorts, hay, wood, fruits, herbs, etc. *Mixt*, as colts, calves, lambs, chickens, milk, cheese and eggs. *Personal*, as arising from labour, and personal work, etc. Let any one imagine any power on earth at the present day—whether under pretence of divine or any other sanction, attempting to re-impose such exactions as these, and the angry outcries which would ensue. Then there were differences of opinion constantly arising as to what was tithable and what was not; also as to the amount of the *modus decimandi*, the eternal litigation over the agreement or composition before the Courts or the Justices, the costs of trial, amount of damages, etc.

The following benefaction might be of interest:

"Thomas Woolley, Gent., decessed, by his Will bearing date the xxviijth daye of August Anno. D'ni., 1609, did give and bequeathe unto the p'ishe of Worffeld, in the Countie of Salop, One Hundred Pounds to buy vlb. land of inheritance to be bestowed in mann'r and formme following, that is to saie, uppon the Sabbaoth next before St. Thomas' day, before xxmas, after evening prayer the some of fourtie shillings uppon Hierome Warter, ijs. vjd., John Frodgesley, ijs. vjd., Thomas Lowe, ijs., vjd., Robt. Maynard, ijs. vjd. to Jo—Weaver, ijs. vjd. to Eleanor Warter, and Susan Walker to eche of them xijd. yf they be inhabitants in the Towne of Hallon; to the use of the Towne of Worfield, namely to Alice Freewoman to John Grome. ijs., to Richard Hatton, xijd., and to his brother Roger Hatton xijd., to Hugh Yeate xijd., to his sister Mary Yeate xijd., unto George Stanton ijs., and thus much after this manner p'scribed to be bestowed uppon the same persons above named at or uppon the Sabbaoth, called Palme Sunday before Easter, yf it shall happen that any of these persons above named shall dye, then I would have Mr. Thomas Bromley of Hallon, and his Ante Mrs. Wolryche to be chieff nominators of such as shall be thought fitt to

be p'takers of the Almes, and to succeed the p'ties above decessed. And to this end I would have the Vicar of Worffeld, or the Schoolm'r to keepe a booke wherein shall be registered the names of these poor persons above named, that they may be called at these tymes sett down to receive as is appointed for them, and the Vicar or Schoolm'r at eche time when he distributeth this almes to have xijd."

The devisor then wills the remainder to be disposed of by Mr. Bromley and Mrs. Wolryche, and provides under conditions that 20s. remaining of the £5, shall be bestowed upon some preacher or preachers to preach two sermons at the times named, and two other sermons at other times.

Among other documents relating to the church is one headed, "This is the Rowl of the Church Seats, May ye 9th, Anno Dom: 1637." And commences thus:—"Worfield: An order agreed upon the day and year above written, by John Bache and Thomas Bache, Churchwardens for ye said parish of Worfield, with ye assistance of Henry Davenport, Esq., Francis Rowley, Gent. John Beech, John Yate, Thomas Beech." Then follow other names.

Another headed "Seats belonging to the women" gives a list of 27 as claimed by wives and widows.

A further allotment made by the Vicar and Churchwardens, dated 15th of May, 1796, contains a plan of the interior of the Church, in which the pews are marked out and numbered, and the names of the owners written on them. At this time pews were claimed as freehold property, to be bought and sold; and even votes for coroners and members of parliament were claimed for them.

CHAPTER V.

The Church—Chantry Chapels and Chaplains—The Virgin and St. Nicholas—Restoration of the Church, etc.

WORFIELD is one of the very few parishes in the county whose church is embellished with a spire. It is singularly graceful and beautiful in construction and, including the tower, is 200 feet in height, being, within a few feet, as high as St. Mary's, Shrewsbury, which is equal to the third of the three loftiest spires in the Kingdom. It has three heights of canopied windows ; and the tower, which is a little higher than St. Mary's, has pinnacles at the angles, and an embattled parapet. It stands at the west end of the church, against a green slope, which has been cut into to give it position, and is thrown into pleasing relief by this, as well as by the dark foliage of a wood which rises above. And, what is important, it has six good bells to give tongue to time. Their sound from youth to age floats with sweet melody over the quiet fields to cheer the distant Townships which cluster round, and their tones are fraught with many memorial associations and mental images. To all, the music of the Worfield peal is proverbial :—

> "O, what a preacher is the time-worn tower,
> Reading great sermons with its iron tongue!"*

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* The following are the Inscriptions on the Bells.

1st Bell. Prosperity to all our true friends. 1699, John Malpass ; Thos. Barney (Sexton). A.R.

2nd Bell. Wee were all cast at the City of Gloucester. A.R.

3rd Bell. God save the King. 1699. Thos. Bradborne. A.R.

4th Bell. Abra. Rudhall cast us all. 1699. John Walker, gent.

5th Bell. 1699. William Thomason, Thomas Bache, churchwardens.

6th Bell. I to the church the living call, and to the grave do summon all.

The Vicar's Bell. 1779. William Williamson, churchwarden.

On the village side is a handsome clock with chimes, which strikes the quarters, recently placed there by an anonymous donor. It cost £50, also £50 to put it into position, and £50 to adjust the bells to a modern musical scale.

The tower and steeple are of what authorities on such matters, term the Third Pointed period of Architecture : being later additions to the main structure which, like many others in this county, is Middle Pointed, probably of the 14th century,—but with traces of earlier styles. It consists of nave, and north and south aisles, of nearly equal width, and a well-developed chancel. The arcades have wide pointed arches, with hood mouldings, and octagonal pillars. Against the wall on the south side also are traces of an earlier column. The chancel arch rises from circular shafts, with capitals surmounted by abaci, one sculptured with ball flowers, the other with heads. In the south wall of the chancel is a triple sedilia, or stone seats for priests during the service of high mass ; and in the same south wall a piscina, or recess, where the priest washed his hands and rinsed the chalice. On each side, next the chancel, is a smaller and plainer arch, broken in the wall, and opening into the chantry chapels. The one at the east end of the south aisle was dedicated to St. Nicholas, the patron Saint of virgins ; a saint remarkable for his piety and charity, whom Constantine the Great raised to a bishopric. Offerings appear to have been made to this Saint, for it is recorded in the early part of the reign of Henry VIII, that Richard Felton "gave Saynt Nicholas a Heyfre of 2 years age."

The other chantry was dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and had a priest or chaplain to sing mass for the souls of the departed. Thomas de Norfield, who was chaplain in 1345, was admitted by Bishop Northburg, on the presentation of William Kirby, who was the last rector of Worfield. A succession of chaplains for this chantry were appointed down to 1534-5, when Sir John Lee was chaplain, and in receipt of £2 per annum, paid by the churchwardens, from certain lands in Worfield, Hallon, Sonde, Bridgnorth, etc. He also had £2 paid him from the parishioners. A list of the Churchwardens commencing 1501, shows that four churchwardens were annually chosen,

two being mentioned as for the chantry of the Virgin Mary; but from 1521 only two were elected. Mention was made on page 15 of the "Rental of the glorious Virgin Mary of Worfield," for a "tapyr for our Ladye," and of monies paid for praying for the souls of Mary Warton and John Pryse. There are others for the painting and gilding of the Rood, and Roodloft.

The prefix Sir, to the name of the above priest, was only a clerical title, I suspect. He is spoken of in one place as 'our Lady's priest'; and sometimes as Dominic, a corruption of Dominus, meaning the chief or great man of the parish. Some writers seem to have fallen into the error of supposing that Dominic was his name. He was the last Roman Catholic priest who officiated here, and was buried in the chapel in which he officiated, at the east end of the north aisle, where there is said to be a defaced stone to his memory. But if the old faith was on the wane, it had not, or at least the church had not yet forced itself from former usages and customs, for about 1555, entries are found of several items which tend to show that the "holy water potte" was in use, and that deputations were sent from this church to the Cardinal's visitation at Lichfield.

Still, the belief in the efficacy of prayers to the Virgin and to St. Nicholas was declining fast, and in 1565, I find entries of payments for taking down the Roodloft and carrying away altar stones.

The Church Register commences May 1st, 1562, 5th of Elizabeth, the year the altar was taken down. At the commencement is the following note: "Yt was agreed wth the consent of John Baker—— Bromley, John Hitchcoke of Chesterton, and Roger Baker of Kyngslowe, that Mr. Thomas Barkley of Yewdness and his wyffe, should knelle in the pew next our Lady chancell for and during their natural lyves and no longer, in the yeare of our Lord god 1597, for the Foresaid pewe belongeth to the housse of the foresaid John Baker for Swancott; John Hitchcoke for his housse at Chesterton; Roger Baker for the housse that he now dwelleth in at Kingslowe, Being the housse of Mr. Thomas Hoode———."

The first entry in the Register, made the first day of May 1562—the 5th Elizabeth, mentions Homffray Barney as Vicar.

This old book is in a very dilapidated condition, by reason of its age and the frequent use made of it. People come long distances to search it. One gentleman on the other side the Atlantic, who, if not a Yankee, had been long enough amongst them to have gained something of their cuteness, wrote a short time ago to ask the Vicar to lend it him!

The rectors of the church, from the reign of King John, 1213, to 1325, when it became a vicarage, numbered 13; amongst them were men who rose to great eminence in their day, as Bishops, Lord Chancellors, etc. The number of vicars who succeeded, including the present one, has been 18. It may be thought by reducing the living in dignity and emolument, Bishop Langton had become a convert to the views of that distinguished Reformer, John Wycliffe, who laboured to restore the long-lost purity of the clergy by apostolic poverty. The vicars certainly stuck to the living longer than the rectors, as a rule; for I find from a list of incumbents from 1564 to 1763:—

"Humphrey Barney, vicar 44 years; died 1608.
Francis Barney, vicar 56 years; died 1664.
James Hancox, vicar 42 years; died 1707.
Daniel Admaston, vicar 56 years; died 1763."

Four vicars lived 199 years; and all of them lived, I suppose, in the humble parsonage house, previously described!

Prior to its restoration, the church was nearly a match for the parsonage. Like similar edifices, it had suffered greatly at the hands, first of those desirous of obliterating all signs of the worn out faith; and secondly at those of ignorant whitewashers, plasterers, and repairers, till the year 1861, when the patron, vicar, and churchwardens, made efforts which were heartily responded to by the neighbouring gentry, farmers, and parishioners generally, which resulted in the correction of many of these irregularities. The work was ably carried out by Mr. Yates of Shifnal, and the Messrs. Francis, architects, of London, at a cost of £2159 13s. 1d. The gallery which

blocked up the west end was taken down, the plaster which hid the wooden ceilings was scraped off and the woodwork exposed. Other obstructions which marred the design of the builders were removed, and the primary meaning and beauty of the building displayed. The whole of the chancel windows were taken out and replaced with new, and a handsome five-light flowing tracery window was inserted at the east end. The floor of the chancel was laid with encaustic tiles; handsome oak stalls and a massive communion rail were erected. The old deal and box-like pews gave way to others, open and of oak, with panelled backs and ends of geometrical tracery. A new four-light window was introduced at the west end, filled with painted glass, representing the Four Acts of Mercy, presented by Mr. Peter Joynson, as a memorial to his parents, formerly of Rowley. The south-west window, depicting the Day of Judgment, was placed there in memory of T. J. Vickers and his wife, by his daughter Marianne. The north-west represents the anointing of the feet of Christ, the woman touching the hem of His garment, and the appearance of Christ to Mary in the garden after the resurrection. The subjects of the remaining ones are, the parable of the talents, the good Samaritan (a memorial to Joseph Thomas Parkes, Esq., and his brother Charles), His conversation with Mary and Martha, and with the woman of Samaria at the well, the Good Shepherd—the latter being the gift of the cottagers of the parish. There is also one painted by the late artist, Mr. Evans, representing the angel at the tomb of our Lord, and the journey to Emmaus, a memorial of the Ven. Archdeacon Vickers (of Salop), by his wife. All these windows, with the exception of the last, were executed by Alexander Gibbs, Esq. The pulpit, which is made of oak, and most elaborately carved, stands upon a stone pedestal, also beautifully carved; it is composed of red Mansfield stone, polished Devonshire marble, Caen, and other stones. The reading desk and lectern are also of richly carved oak, and were the gifts of W. S. Davenport, Esq., the patron of the living. He also almost rebuilt the chancel, which has a five-light and seven other side windows, painted by Mr. Gibbs.

CHAPTER VI.

The Bromley Monuments—A Sarcophagus—A well-kept Churchyard—National and Grammar Schools, Mills, Inns, etc.

AT the restoration of the Church in 1861-2, the Bromley monuments stood in what was commonly called the Bromley chapel, at the east end of the north aisle, formerly, as has been shown, St. Mary's Chantry. They were removed in 1866 to the west end of that aisle, and stripped of the wood work screens which gave a "dim religious light" to the gilt and coloured effigies within. One part was taken and cut down to screen the chancel from the nave, where it now stands; the other to perform similar duty for the vestry, which was removed from near the Bromley monuments by the chancel to an opening in the tower at the west end of the south aisle. Formerly, a similar open wood screen, described as a very beautiful one of oak, stood at the east end of the south aisle, in front of St. Nicholas's Chapel. This, it seems pretty clear, was sold by the churchwardens to Mr. Bowen, a house-painter, in Shrewsbury, who decorated his dining-room with it, where it was discovered by the vicar of Atcham, who purchased it to adorn his church. As some doubt has been cast upon this statement, made elsewhere, I may quote a passage from a letter of the patron of the living which appeared in the *Wellington Journal*, during the dispute. Mr. Davenport says: "It was sold (a thousand pities of course) before my time." *Kelly's Directory* too, for 1885, repeating a statement made in 1870, in speaking of Atcham Church, says: "The nave and ~~church~~ of St. Eata (Atcham) are chancel separated by a screen of beautiful tracery, brought from the church of Worfield." Let us hope that the modern representatives of the "children of St. Eata" may be induced to make restitution; that it may again be placed in its original position, and that the present screens may again become a protection to these beautiful monuments.

With regard to the removal of the monuments themselves, the patron, Mr. Davenport, in the letter quoted, remarks:—"we decided to remove them because we thought it more in accordance with 19th century ideas to consider the living rather than the dead, and to shift them—being stone, and consequently not likely to suffer from catarrh in any shape or form—to their present position, and by so doing enable the poor school children (who formerly sat in the corner now complained of as too damp and dark for the monuments) to come to the front and take part in the services, and I feel certain that my Bromley ancestors, if really worthy of the epitaphs written upon the tablets to their memory, would rejoice in the change could they see what has been done."

That may be, but if these distinguished ancestors may be supposed to have carried with them the ordinary cuteness of men of their profession, it is more than probable they would have stipulated for the screens to remain, as a protection from the nailed shoes of visitors. The kneeling figures at the foot of Sir Edward Bromley's monument have been mutilated. Some have been decapitated, some have lost, not only their heads, but their limbs, whilst others are undistinguishable as figures. These monuments are worth preserving, and worthy of all care being taken of them. The tracery at the back of the figures of Sir Edward Bromley and Dame Jane his wife, is most exquisite. Above the inscription is a shield bearing a cross, supported on each side by ornamental scroll work. Over an arch rising above, and at the two corners, are family shields and arms; there is also a central shield above the entablature, surmounted by a figure. Near the base of the right hand pillar, between that and the square tablet containing the inscription, is a well-sculptured group of emblems of mortality, consisting of a skull, a spade, and a mattock. On the corresponding, or left side, is an inverted torch, and ornamental work. The whole extends up the wall to a considerable height. The little capitals of the pillars still show the gold, and some traces of colour in the folds of the garments of the figures are visible. The tomb of Sir George Bromley and his wife is still more elaborate. It has a canopy, richly carved, supported by white and black marble pillars, the latter of which have been polished. The inscriptions on these monuments are as follows:

Sir George Bromley, Knight, Chieffe Justice of Chester, and of
The Covncell in the Marches of Wales: a Jvst man and a
Great professor of the Religion now established, depar-
ted this life the second of March, 1588, Aged 63.
The said Sir George Bromley and his younger Brother, Sir
Thomas Bromley, Knight, Lord Chancelor of England, were
the only sonnes of George Bromley, of Hawkstone, Esqvier, and
of Jane, one of the Davghters of Sir Thomas Lakon, of Willey, Knight.
The vertuous matron, Dame Jane, wife to Sir George Bromley, Knight,
Davghter and sole Heire of JOHN WANNERTON, of Hallon, Gent.,
Departed this life the 19th of November, 1606, Aged 73. They
Had betweene them Tenne children, sixe sonnes: 4 Davghters.
The worthy Jvdge, Sir Edward Bromley, Knight, second
Baron of the Excheqver, who Kneeleth Here, of a Pious
mynd did consecrate This monument to his dear Parents.
Anno 1622.

SPIRITUS ASTRA PETIT.

Here Restcth The Bodie of Sir Edward
Bromley, Knight, second Ba-
ron of Excheqver, Being se-
cond sonne of Sir George Bromley,
Knight, and of Dame Jane his wife,
Who married Margaret one of the
Davghters and coheires of Michael
Lowe, of Tymore, in the County
of Stafford, Esqvire. and died
without issve, the second of Jvne,
1626. Dame Maragaret his wife
according to his will did dedi-
cate This monument to his memory.

Seeing that these distinguished persons were not buried in the church, it matters little what position within their monuments occupy; and it would have been well if intramural burials had been less encouraged by the authorities, nothing being more deleterious than the gases given off during decomposition. I have copies of the whole of the inscriptions of the monumental tablets, slabs, hatchments, etc. on the walls, and in the nave and aisles, but find it would swell out this little book beyond reasonable limits to give them; many of the names will come up for mention when speaking of the living persons, in connection with their respective townships.

No one seems to know anything of the sarcophagus or stone coffin which lies untenanted outside the church door. It appears to

be a harder and more durable stone than any quarried in the Worfe Valley, or than that from Alveley, used in the construction of the Church and National Schools. I scarcely think it is a "freestone," if so, it must have come from a considerable distance. That oft quoted authority, "the oldest inhabitant," is totally ignorant concerning it; even tradition itself is silent. One would have thought that the "ancient men," who seem to have been summoned in times past to decide most doubtful questions, would have traced its connection to the legendary chief who is supposed to have fought and fell at Hallon Ford: it would, at any rate, have been as apposite as the Tenterden Steeple and Goodwin Sands solution.

As ancient as this mysterious relic, I suppose, is the old yew tree, near the lich-gate, on the other side of the graveyard. Its trunk is singularly marked by new shoots, which give it almost the appearance of a Norman column. Much cannot be said in favour of the taste which dictated the close clipping of the top into a cone. Looking at the seat surrounding it, one is led to reflect how many "Fathers of the Hamlets" sat there before they were "gathered to *their* fathers," and went to "swell the mouldering heap," which in course of ages has risen so high above the basement line of the church and the road. Evidences of the strong attachments the parishioners have for lost kindred is pleasingly evidenced by the well-kept graves, the neat headstones and other mural memorials one sees, no less than by floral decorations renewed, again, and again. For the reason just stated I am prevented going into further detail; otherwise there are some really artistic designs in various coloured marbles worthy of notice.

Formerly the clergy appear to have combined the offices of pastor and schoolmaster. In the 16th century notices occur of payments, sometimes to the vicar, and at others to the schoolmaster; also with regard to the schoolhouse. In 1640, July 16th, there is an entry of the burial of Mr. Armiger Edes, of Hallon, schoolmaster of Worfield, curate of Badger. Then came a long period when the school, having degenerated into a mere village school, practically answered the purpose of an Elementary School, until the present excellent National Schools were built and opened. The school then again rose into

what is termed a second grade Grammar School, and was attended chiefly by sons of the farmers and residents of the neighbourhood. The school building was in the village street, adjacent to the church gate, with play-ground behind, which has been lately taken into the churchyard. The house is an interesting old timbered building (now a club room for men and boys) with open roof. There are evident signs of an upper story, intended doubtless for the master's rooms, but he must have been content with very limited accommodation, and lived probably in single blessedness. In bold Latin characters, in red, is the following on one of the beams: *Mens sana in corpore sano.* A sane mind in a sound body.

The original endowment of Lloyd and Parker's school was insignificant; four cottages, a small field at Worfield, and a croft at Quatford. These possessions have been sold, and the proceeds of this and of the much more valuable Brierley Charity amalgamated with it, are now invested in Consols.

After the establishment of Parochial Schools, the Grammar School had a flourishing time, particularly under the direction of Mr. Isaac Hoppett, who was master from 1856 to 1876. The building however was inconvenient, and the master, who took boarders in his house, had to live at one time nearly 2 miles from the scene of his daily labour. Mr. Hoppett died in harness, and there is a cross erected to his memory, by his pupils and friends, at the top of the churchyard, and overlooking the spot where he lived so beloved and worked so hard. The operation of the Endowed Schools Act presently put a new aspect upon affairs. Things were long unsettled, and but for the firmness of one or two of the trustees, well nigh the whole of the funds belonging to the Parish of Worfield would have been diverted to the establishment of one large school, probably at or very near Bridgnorth. This danger over, the scheme of the Endowed School Commissioners was adopted, the various charities were "united," and the income shared between the poor, the Elementary School, and the Grammar School.

It then became necessary to provide suitable buildings and grounds for the last mentioned: to this end the governors purchased

s property at Roughton, 5 acres in extent, with a house thereon to which school-rooms and dormitories were added, so as to give accommodation to some 30 or 40 pupils. In its new position the school was opened in 1880, under the present headmaster, the Rev. T. W. Turner, M.A., Trinity College, Dublin, and has certainly flourished. There are usually as many boarders as the house will hold, and the day boys come from various places within a circle of some 6 or 7 miles radius.

Among other noticeable features of Worfield are its mills. At the Norman Conquest, or at any rate when King William's Census takers went round, there were three mills, they tell us, the value of which was equal to a ninth of the annual value of the whole manor. Older therefore than the church is Worfield mill. It has been renewed, of course, again and again, but for eight hundred years have its monotonous clack and its low and continuous crunching sounds been heard along the pleasant valley of the Worfe. I suppose the inhabitants of the village, whose gardens come down close to the river, are so accustomed to the sounds that they do not hear them. The water of the Worfe, in order to take the broad pair of wheels breast high, is husbanded a little, into a small lakelet, which extends back to the old vicarage. It forms a famous fishery above the weir; and when the clatter of the works is temporarily stayed, the rush and play of the waters escaping by the sparkling and foaming weirs have a very pleasant sound. What a succession of millers there must have been during the eight past centuries. I wonder whether all these grinders of their neighbour's batches were as blithe and hale as the one King Hal knighted, or as the one which Charles Mackay immortalised in the following lines:

"There dwelt a miller hale and bold,
Beside the river Dee,
He work'd and sang from morn till night,
No lark more blythe than he.
And this the burden of his song
For ever used to be,—
'I envy nobody, no not I,
And nobody envies me

One wonders too if they were all honest: and whether they exceeded the one handful allotted out of their neighbour's bag: and whether they paid the full peck of corn prescribed weekly to the vicar. There were formerly two mills, Worfield Mill and Rowley Mill, near together; and the Terrier previously quoted, says: "The Vicar hath also from the 2 Corne miles a pecke of corn a peece for the week by p'scription." The vicars, close to whose grounds the pounded up water reaches, must have had many a spotted trout and portly jack out of this portion of the river. One vicar, Sir John Walker, Son of John Walker, of Roughton, and fifth in descent from John Walker, of Rindleford, in 1511, it is said "obtained a license from the lord of the manor, to fish in the river Worfe, between the Vicarage and Rowley Mill, for 2d. yearly, for life." Let us hope he had better luck than another and later Sir John (Sir John Morris), whom I saw fishing there the other day, and who told me on leaving, that after threshing the water for hours, he had caught nothing!

Worfield has two well kept Inns: the Davenport Arms, in the village, and the Wheel, generally called 'The Wheel o' Worvill,' just outside, on the Wolverhampton road. Both, in the summer time, are patronised by visitors, who come to see the church, or to fish either in the Worfe or one of its tributaries. At the former hostel is held the annual Court leet dinner. This custom of a dinner has outlived the others. These customs bore the appearance of self rule, whilst lacking the reality, and, as improved forms of government grew up, it became a farce, a nuisance,—a sort of "poke-your-nose-into everybody's-business Club." The only "Aale tasters" now are voluntary ones, who call at the 'Davenport Arms,' or the 'Weel-o-Worvill.' The pinfold is gone, the stocks are gone, even the annual dinner, the best part of the institution, is going,—at least the last that was held took place three years ago. But I am told there has been a jury sworn, or will be, and that another meeting will be held next May, if so, once more gentlemen may meet in solemn conclave, drink a few toasts, crack a few jokes, and make merry over 'Leet Aales.'

CHAPTER VII.

ACKLETON.

Its connection with Badger—Old families—Old Charters—The franchise.

WORFIELD consists of the following townships, which the late Mr. Hardwicke the antiquary considered were older than the Conquest, and which are enumerated as far back as Edward III, thus:—Ackleton, Allscote, Barnsley, Bentley, Bradney, Bromley, Burcote, Catstree, Chesterton, Cranmere, Ewdness, Ewyke, Hallon, Hilton, Hoccom, Kingslowe, Newton, Oldington, Rindleford, Roughton, Rowley, Sonde, Stableford, Stanlowe, Swancote, Winscote, Worfield and Wyken.

There is scarcely one of these townships but has sufficient material connected with it such as might profitably be worked up into a book as large as this is proposed to be. How then to condense and compress it into a shilling volume is the difficulty. The best way of treating them will be, probably, to take them alphabetically, as enumerated above.

ACKLETON is situated on high ground, on an outstanding spur of red sandstone, commanding varied and charming panoramic views. It adjoins the undulating and well-wooded estate of Badger, to which it was in early times attached; Both now belong to the same owner, Col. A. C. Cure. The same feudal lords held both by sergeantry, the service being that the tenant kept the forest of Shirlot, then a royal chase for deer. Philip Fitz Stephens held it from 1100 to 1135, after him his son and grandson; the latter held it from 1160 to 1196. Some interruption in the tenure probably then occurred, as indicated by a charter of Henry II., which runs thus:—"Henry, King of England and Duke of Normandy and Aquitain, and Earl of Anjou, to his sheriff and ministers of Salopescire greeting. I enjoin you that ye cause recognition to be made by oath of lawful men of the vicinage as to the kind of service by which Stephen,

father of my forester Philip, and the grandfather of the same Philip, held Acclington, their land, in the time of King Henry, my grandfather, and that when such recognition shall have been made, ye shall permit him so to hold it and with such comparative advantage and freedom, both in waters and meadows, and pastures, and by the same service." Ackleton then came into the hands of the Bagsores, one of whom was a crusader 1227-9, and they continued to hold both Badger and Ackleton till they sold their right to Guy le Strange, one of those *strangers* (whence the name) who accompanied Henry of Anjou on his coming to take possession of the English crown. This family of *strangers* seem to have considered that they had got a good thing, and made themselves at home here; for in 1176 Philip de Strange paid to the king ten marks "that he might hold Acklington, a member of Worfield, at a fee farm rent of 60s.," his object being, it is thougbt, to get rid of some inconvenient service hitherto exacted from the king's tenant at Ackleton.

At what precise period the Eykyns came into possession of their property at Ackleton, I have no facts to show, neither do the family themselves appear to know; their opinion is, however, that their ancestors held it direct from the king, and that they shared in the privileges usually allotted to favoured tenants of the Crown; and that this was at a period anterior to the reign of Edward III., is evident from charters in the Bodleian.

One of these charters run thus:—"Whereas Richard Eakin of Ackleton, in the parish of Worfield, makes oath that notwithstanding his lands in the said parish are all antient demesne lands for which he ought not to be returned to serve on juries, being freed and exempted by an antient charter made in the time of K. Edw. III, and produced here in court, yet he is still returned by the sheriffs of the county to serve on juries both at Assizes and Sessions, contrary to the said Charter. It is ordered by the Court that the Sheriff of this county and all succeeding Sheriffs do for ye future forbear to return ye said Richd. Eakin to serve on any jury for the said lands he holds in the said parish as antient demesne, and that his name be forthwith put out of the freeholder books." The Eykyns have not always availed themselves of their privileges of exemption from

duties laid on their neighbours; they share hem as honest men should do. The cause of exemption, too, may no longer exist; but what that cause was is not stated. We can imagine the exemption to have been in consequence of some offices conferred in connection with a Royal chase, either of Shirlot or of Morfe, but most probably the former, which required the undivided attention of those on whom the privilege was conferred.

At a "presentment of the minister and churchwardens, together with four aunicient men of the said parish, made and duly served at the visitation holden at Penn, September, A. Dom. 1612, touching the abutting and lymitting of lands belonging to the vicarage and houses there," under Ackleton occur the following payments:— "Tyror 1s. 1d., Eykeyn 1s. ob., Parsons 7d., Bradley 10d. ob., Roger Barnett 7d., Hoathill 7d. ob., Thomas Barrett 11d., in cowshall 6d, ob., Thomason 7d., Penry 3d., Brown 7d., Toy 3d. ob., Blackman and ffelton 3d. ob., Bradwin 3d. ob." In a copy of "The Customs of the Manor of Worfield, under the hand of Robert Barret, gentleman, 1717," it is stated that "the manor of Ackleton pays three pounds per annum for a chief rent to the lord of the Manor of Worfield, and the reeve of the manor of Worfield hath power to appoint a reeve to gather that rent;" "and four men and the reeve of Ackleton ought to appear at our Court Leet to present; if not, all the townships, except those that do appear, ought to be amerced." A regard for the origin, the possessions, the privileges, and the homes of their ancestors, has led the Eykyns to remain and spend their lives at Ackleton—a spot remarkable for its physical position and the surrounding natural beauties of the situation. If they parted with a portion of their land, it was in a friendly exchange with a neighbour. The Eykyn and the Stubbs families, the former the oldest in the district, and the latter claiming royal descent, were at one time intimate, and an exchange of lands took place between them. One of the Stubb's Beckbury fields is still called "Eykyn's Hill;" and one of Mr. Richard Eykyn's fields at Ackleton is known as "Stubb's Leason" (or Leasow). The name is rather an unusual one, and in old documents is found spelt in different ways, as Ekins, Eakin, Eakinge, Ekin, Eaken, Eyken, and Eykyn, as now. How long the

family have enjoyed their position or possessions neither they nor any one else seems to know. Not that they are indifferent on the subject; on the contrary, they cherish the sentiment of home and of honour, and not less those symbols of gentility which combine to form the family shield. The feeling is a natural one; for as the flush on a maiden's cheek is at once the sign of health and a cause of beauty, so heraldic honours, pedigrees, and charters made to ancestors, are not mere ornaments, but proofs positive of usefulness and of recognised merit, stimulating modern representatives to act their part and discharge their duties as best befits the character of those gone before. The Eykyns of past ages were of course office holders in Courts, commissions, and as witnesses of deeds and charters, as constables—when the word constable carried with it a higher signification than now—and also churchwardens. The present Mr. Eykyn has filled the latter office for more than 20 years, I believe. I have frequently come across the name in connection with various honourable offices, usually allotted to those enjoying superiority of birth or distinguished by the privilege antiquity confers. It is to be regretted, perhaps, that no remains of the old homes of this ancient family are left. They have three mansions pleasingly situated and surrounded by ornamental grounds; two are in possession of very respectable tenants at about a stone's throw from each other, but neither seems to present traces of the homes of the ancestors of the family.

The principal inhabitants, in addition to the Eykyns, are Mr. R. Wilson, who carries on a large malting business, wetting about 200 sacks weekly. Mr. Wilson has bored into the red sandstone rock and obtained an excellent supply of good water on the spot; and has a large brewery at Bridgnorth, where he has formed an artesian well in the rock, the water of which has been tested, and proved highly valuable. Mr. W. Piper, gentleman farmer; and Mr. J. B. Hemmings. In addition to these there are others living in genteel looking houses, and scattered cottages, on the summit and sides of high ground on which Ackleton stands. There is a post office, a beerhouse, a wheelwright's yard and smithy here.

Ackleton is two miles North-east of the village of Worfield. It belongs to the Ludlow Division, but its neighbour, Badger, for parliamentary purposes, is in the Shifnal or Newport Division.

CHAPTER VIII.

ALSCOTE.

Etymology of the name—Old families—The Ousleys and Hardwickes.

THE name of this Township, like the last, is variously spelt, both in ancient and modern writings. It is three miles and a half distant from Ackleton, and one and a half miles from Worfield village. It is one of four on the South-west side of the parish having names terminating in cot or cote. There are ten or a dozen others in the agricultural parts of Shropshire where the word cote is still in use, denoting a shed or shelter for sheep or cattle. The meaning therefore is obvious, and carries us back to the period when shepherds and herdsmen tended their flocks and cattle in sheltered and cultivated spots on the borders or within the confines of the great Morfe forest. Alscote is still a pastoral bit of land, of about 255 acres; and is chiefly the property of W. O. Foster, Esq. who is Lord of the Manor. It lies on the high ground on the right bank of the Worf, near the Wellington and Bridgnorth road. On entering it from the latter point the visitor will not fail to notice an old house having about it a look of the "olden time." It creates the impression that it has seen better days, but how many decades have passed since then it is difficult to determine. It is believed to have been built by one of the Ousleys, an old Shropshire family; but of whose members in connection with Alscote I have learnt little. At what time the Ousleys built Alscote House, or how long the family continued to reside there, are questions not easy to determine. That the building was intended to be durable, and in some measure ornamental, is evident from its substantial masonry, and the care and taste displayed in its construction. It has white stone mullioned windows; dark red-sandstone corners to the brick walls, and string-courses also of red sandstone. It has on the north side a gable, tall and narrow, with three storey mullioned windows; in

this gable was the front entrance, and a porch, but the space it occupied has been converted into a dairy. The old front door, studded with rough nails, remains. After the fashion of old houses, a massive chimney rises in the centre, then divides above the roof into four stacks or flues, which again unite at the top. A few of the upper divisions of the second storey windows remain, leaded in richly ornamental and fanciful forms, but after one general geometrical pattern. On going down into the cellar it is seen at once how it is arched and fashioned for the purpose of affording strength and storage, with strong pendant hooks capable of holding a hog, a sheep, or a haunch of venison, and in forest times probably they had done so. Interesting and ancient as the old mansion appears, there is at one end the relic of one much earlier, but what period intervened between the erection of the two, by how many king's reigns or dynasties, even, the one preceded the other, it is not easy to determine. Contrasted with the elegant old mansion described, it is like a fragment a geologist sometimes finds of one formation cropping up and intruding itself into another of more recent geological time. It is partly timbered, partly lath and plaster, partly brickwork.

In modern times Alscote was the residence of William Hardwicke, Esq., the antiquary, who was born here, and whose life and works formed the subject of Mr. Hubert Smith's pleasant pen, in a little work beautifully illustrated with photos of the north and south fronts of the house, and an internal view of one of the windows. This useful little memoir is also graced with a vignette portrait of this indefatigable antiquary, who was born here, January 12th, 1772. He was proctor and registrar of the Royal Peculiar of Bridgnorth, and author of a MS. history of Salop, now in the British Museum. He was a solicitor in partnership with Mr. Devey, a gentleman of independent means, who married Miss Barnfield, of Ewdness, and whose daughter, Miss Devey, married William Farmer, Esq., of Sutton Maddock, subsequently of Canada West. Mr. Hardwicke's MS. Shropshire pedigrees, which formed a thick folio volume, with supplementary pedigrees and notes, were sold at his death to the late Mr. Smallman, of Quatford Castle, who left them by will to Mr. Sidney Stedman Smith, who bequeathed them to Mrs. Haslewood,

who now possesses them. His voluminous MS. collections, which he had completed for a history of Shropshire, were sold at the sale of the Mytton collection of topographical and genealogical manuscripts in London, on the 2nd of May, 1877. He was often consulted on difficult questions of pedigree by the officials of the Heralds College, London, and was pronounced by the late Sir George Young, Garter King-at-Arms, as a most painstaking and careful genealogist. He died February 1843, in the 72nd year of his age, and was buried in the picturesque sea-side churchyard of Llanaber, about two miles from Barmouth.

CHAPTER IX.

BURCOTE.

Discovery of a cave by the Worf—Derivation of the name—Brief history of the Hardwicke family.

BURCOTE is a township, 1 mile south-west of Worfield Church, on the left of the Worf, and on the opposite side of the valley to Davenport House and Park, of which good views are afforded from the high ground. Lower down are cottages more than half concealed, and perched on natural terraces, one being in part scooped out of the rock itself. It is a charming spot certainly—one of great natural beauty, quietude, and repose; even the old mill in the vale is still, and no sound is heard but the waters of the Worf over mill dams and weirs. A lady, to whom I expressed admiration, replied, "Yes; they praise Hawkstone, but I can see nothing in Hawkstone to compare with it." It is not unusual, I found, to speak of it as "Little Switzerland." The mill is a venerable structure with one undershot wheel; and painted high up on the gable, is the following:—"The Earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." Below, nailed against the wall, are ghastly heads of monster pike, caught in the mill race, and which, I am told, had come down from Patshull pool. Their teeth seemed capable of playing havoc with the trout, which it is said they have seriously thinned in the river. I saw one solitary fisherman, with his creel, whether full or not I cannot say, proceeding up stream. These Burcote Rocks attained some celebrity in the first decade of the present century by the discovery of a cave, an account of which appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* at the time. The extract is too long to give here; suffice it to say that amongst the debris were human and other bones: those of the dog, the sheep, the pig, the deer, etc. Various conjectures were indulged in, some supposing them to have come down from Druidical times, but the probability is, I think, that the cave

was the retreat of some poacher in forest times, who, with his family, got smothered by a landslip closing up the mouth of the cave, which is semicircular in form, and still to be seen, opposite the mill.

Burcote, it will be seen, is another of the four townships having the same terminating syllable in the name. The prefix too is not difficult to make out. It has been said by one recent writer to come from "bourn" or "burn," a word used in Scotland for a brook or rivulet, and cote, a dwelling near a burn. This appears very doubtful and far-stretched, as "burn" is usually applied to an insignificant stream, whilst the Worf is a river which in former times was much more formidable than now, and of such force as to carve out its own course, and give us the beautiful undulations we find along its banks. Had it been that the valley had widened from its mouth upwards, it might have been supposed that it was the cutting action of the Severn straits which had been the agent in its formation, but it draws in and narrows to a gorge at Rindleford Mill, then swells out into a sweet vale, having Davenport House and park and grounds on one side, and on the other the Burcote rocks and woods. Any one who has seen the Worfe rushing over the weirs in two channels, as I have seen it, not to speak of the traces it left over a space a quarter of a mile wide, when flooded, would never think of applying the word "burn" to it. No, the name Burcote explains itself. There are two —"Over" and "Nether" Bore-cote, as the name is found to have been spelt prior to the reign of Edward III., places where boars were tended, sheltered, or fed, supplying winter provision when killed and salted and hung in the cratches of the owners. The owner's name, moreover, was Borecote, and a William de Burcote is known to have died of the plague, 25rd Edward III.

The Hardwickes succeeded the Borecotes here in early times. From an interesting family history by Herbert Junius Hardwicke, Esq., of Rotherham, from materials collected by his grandfather, it appears that the dwelling-house belonging to the estate passed from Thomas de Borecote (*temp* Edward III.), through five families —partly by marriage and partly by purchase—to the Hardwickes. It stood in the centre of the township, nearer to the road, which

came winding up as it now does, but nearer to the present house, and was taken down in 1682, most of the old timber being used in the construction of the new one. It was built, as most of the old houses were at the period, in the form of the letter T, was half-timbered, and had a large chimney in the centre. This again was taken down after standing 109 years, in 1791, the old brick and stone being used in the construction of the present one, built by William Powell and his seven sons, who lived at Snowdon Pool at that time.

The house which now belongs to Mrs. John Bell Hardwicke, is situated on a terrace, and it is interesting to witness the efforts made to beautify a spot originally wild, and won from Morfe Forest. It is an oasis where there was a wilderness, and the magnolias, rhododendrons, roses, honeysuckles, and other shrubs and flowers at the time of my visit were in full bloom. Auracarias and cedars also flourish, as though indigenous to the soil; these, Mrs. Hardwicke told me, were grown from canes a former Mr. Hardwicke brought from London in his carpet bag; they are now noble trees, and their sombre green and dark shadows afford a contrast to the foliage of the surrounding woods and plantations. Mrs. Hardwicke is the presiding genius not only of these grounds but of the estate, which consists of 220 acres of richly-wooded and beautifully undulating land and a corn mill, all freehold and tithe free, and watered by the River Worfe throughout its extent. She is a person of great energy and determination, and it is impossible in her presence not to think of her prototype and distant relative, the famous "Bess" of Hardwicke, who had four husbands, built four mansions, and founded as many ducal families, from whom come the Cavendishes and the Hartingtons of the present day.

The name of Hardwicke seems to have been derived from a place, or from some circumstances connected with it. There are several places of the name in Shropshire, as Hardwicke and Hardwicke Grange, also Hardwicke, a township near Oswestry, and Hardwicke, near Norbury. It is said that the original name was "Herdwycke," meaning, a place of residence or a place where herds of deer or swine were sheltered or fed by the owners. The family

residence of the Pattingham branch, called Herdwicke, was sold by Thomas Devey, into whose family it had been brought by marriage, to Sir J. Astley, of Patshull, Bart., in 1755, and the house taken down to form the southern extremity of Patshull Pool. The Hardwickes had been seated there as early as Richard III, when Roger Hardewyke married a daughter of William Steventon, of Dothill, near Wellington, a granddaughter of Robert Charlton, of Apley Castle. Much more respecting this historic family and their marriages and connections might be said, but space permits the following notice only of their present representatives. William Hardwicke, of Burcote, who died 1807, left, besides John Bell Hardwicke, the father-in-law of the present proprietress of Burcote, another son, William Hardwicke, of Diamond Hall, Bridgnorth, Solicitor, who, by his wife, Charlotte Bemand, had a large family. Rev. Edward Hardwicke, M.A. Oxon, of Arley, author of "History of Salop," is the 3rd son. Roger Heynes Hardwicke, M.D., of Malvern, is the 6th son. Eugene Hardwicke, of Crawley, is the 7th son, whose son Richard Reece Hardwicke, M.D. lives in London. Junius Hardwicke, of Chilton Lodge, Rotherham, M.D., F.R.C.S., consulting surgeon to Rotherham Public Hospital, and author of several medical works, eighth son of William Hardwicke, of Diamond Hall, Bridgnorth, and grandson of William Hardwicke, of Burcote; born June 25th, 1821; by his wife, Ellen Jane, daughter of Thomas Wright, of Dublin, he had, besides a daughter that died young, five sons and one daughter, viz.:—I. Edward Arthur Hardwicke, M.D., surgeon-superintendent in H.M. Emigration Service, who by his wife, Margaret, daughter of William Calvert, of Whitewell, has several daughters and one son, Calvert, born 1885. II. William Wright Hardwicke, of Dovercourt, M.D., who by his wife, Alice Mary, daughter of James Danford Baldry, of Chelsea, has, besides other issue, a son Austin. III. Herbert Junius Hardwicke, of Purton Lodge, Sheffield, M.D., F.R.C.S. physician to Sheffield Public Hospital for Skin Diseases, and consulting physician to Leeds Public Hospital for Skin Diseases; author of *Health Resorts and Spas*, a work, speaking of which, the *Pall Mall Gazette* observed: "His short paragraphs are thoroughly up to date, even as regards the smallest and most insignificant

watering-places." His *Medical Education and Practice in all parts of the World*, and similar learned works have been highly praised by the *Lancet*, and the Medical Press generally in England and America. Equally abstruse, learned, and distinguished for research and originality, is a later work, of some three hundred pages, entitled, *The Popular Faith Unveiled*, and one just now published, entitled *Evolution and Creation*. By his wife Mary Elizabeth, daughter of William Allen, of Wink House, Doncaster, he has two sons, William Purton Allen, and Herbert Junius Allen, and two daughters. IV. Ernest Henry Hardwicke, M.D., of Buffalo, N.Y. V. Alan Gardner Hardwicke, of Buffalo, N.Y., Major in N.Y. State Guards. Dr. Junius Hardwicke's only surviving daughter, Constance Ellen, is married to Cornelius Hodgson Du Pré, of Wood Hill, Highley, Salop, only son of Rev. Samuel Du Pré. Of representatives of this ancient family still resident in the township I may mention Mr. Hardwicke, farmer, and his sister, Miss Hardwicke, of Burcote villa.

Among old families who have disappeared and left no representatives here, were the Sadlers. John Sadler purchased an estate at Burcote which descended to his family in the fifth generation. He removed to Swancote, and dying there was interred at Worfield, May 26th, 1605. The family however seem to have lived on at Burcote, for the name occurs in the annals of the parish as of Burcote, chiefly as constables; Thomas Sadler of Burcote is mentioned in 1621 and 1625, and John in 1648. These officers were chosen from the most trusty of the inhabitants, and equipped and furnished at the cost of the parish with harness and weapons; and neighbours say that in taking down the old house where they lived, an old sword and dagger, of Queen Elizabeth's reign, were found in the ruins.

Among other old Burcote families may be mentioned the Walkers, the Waltons, and the Bells, but as they will be found under the heads of other townships they may be passed by for the present, with the brief notice that the Rev. Thomas Bell, rector of Quatt, was born here 1687: also that in the church there is a white marble tablet in memory of William Bell, of Burcote, who died, May the 29th, 1730, Aged 69 years.

CHAPTER X.

BROMLEY.

The Baker and Bromley mansions.—Lord Chief Justice Bromley and family.

BROMLEY may be reached by a winding sandy road at the back of the old Worfe gate-house, or from the other side by the Hermitage Hill. Its situation is similar to that of Burcote, which township it adjoins and, as may be imagined, from the high ground occupied by the township, there is a charming prospect all round. Beyond the undulations of the foreground the eye rests on the wooded heights of Apley, Willey, and Shirlot woods and plantations, and between them runs in serpentine lines the Severn, the valley of which seems bounded by the bold outline of the Wrekin. This view is well seen from the house belonging to Mrs. Smith, at present occupied by the Rev. T. Mayo, M.A. From the garden on the other side, not less pleasing is the outlook over Davenport House and grounds, over the woods about Dallicott House, Patshull Park, Rudge hall, Stanmore, etc.

To the antiquarian, the most conspicuous objects here are the old Bromley and Baker mansions. The latter, in the usual black and white livery of former times, has a downcast look, as though conscious of its decline. and has been converted into cottages. From its proximity to the woods and forest of Morfe, timber was unsparingly used in the construction. Great balks were laid down to build upon ; a framework was then raised upon them, bound together with iron clamps. Some of the timbers are oblique, some are horizontal, others perpendicular, and of various sizes, but all are as black as age can make them. The original windows are small and the rooms low, and the doorways so diminutive that one must stoop to enter. "The door is so heavy," the woman of the house remarked, "that when taken off the hinges for repair, it took two men to remove it, and it was like a plate of iron!" Evidently there was no plaster ceiling to the

chief room ; the oak flooring fitted in between the joists, so that the bare boards were exposed to view. The joists, however, are carefully moulded, as are also the beams and cross-beams, which have an elegant appearance. The Bakers lived here for centuries, and their names appear in the parish annals as holding such offices as small landed proprietors were usually appointed to. One Richard Baker died 15 Edward IV. (1475.) Another Richard Baker is mentioned as churchwarden in 1509; and Roger as holding the same office in 1562; a John Baker also is mentioned in 1640. Richard married Joan, only child of John Cheshome Bromley, by which he acquired property which descended to the late Sir Edward Baker, Bart., of Ranstone, Dorset.

At the beginning of the Worfield register, the first entry in which is dated 1562, fifth of Elizabeth, is a note in which the names of John Baker of Bromley and Roger Baker of Kingslowe occur. The patronymic of this family, Littlehales, was relinquished by the first Bart,, and the surname of Baker adopted in its stead. The Littlehales were seated many centuries at Dawley.

Edward Baker Littlehales, Esq., a Lieut.-Col. in the army (eldest son of Baker John Littlehales, Esq., by Maria, daughter and sole heiress of Bendall Martyn, Esq., and grandson of Joseph Littlehales, Esq., and his wife Elizabeth, sister of William Baker, Esq., and aunt of Peter William Baker, Esq., of Ranston, Co. Dorset, M.P. for Corfe Castle, who died August 1815) having rendered several important services in his country, both civil and military, was created a baronet 2nd September, 1802. Sir Edward married 22nd July, 1805 Lady Elizabeth Mary Fitzgerald, daughter of William Robert, 2nd Duke of Leinster, and by her, who died 28th February, 1857, had a son, Sir Edward Baker, late Bart., who never married. Talbot Hastings Bendall Baker, present Bart., in Holy Orders, married 17th July, 1850, Florence, daughter of John Hutchings, Esq., of Ludlow, who died 29th April, 1869. He married secondly 30th December, 1875, Amy Susan, daughter of Lieut.-Col. Marryat, (and has issue by each wife). William Leinster York Baker died unmarried. Wellington Charles Cecil Baker died unmarried. Charlotte Elizabeth died 27th November, 1848.

Sir Edward Baker assumed by Sign Manual 6th January, 1817, the name of Baker only, and the arms of Baker quarterly with those of Littlehales, he died 4th March, 1825.

Copy of inscription on mural tablet in St. Leonard's church, Bridgnorth.

Lieutenant-Colonel John Littlehales,
Of this Town,
Died October the 8th, 1761,
Aged 60,
Also
Mary his wife, third daughter of
Eldred Lancelot Lees, Esq., of Coton
Hall in this County, who
Died August 3rd, 1807,
Aged 90.

The family arms with crest are emblazoned under the inscription at the bottom of the tablet.

The ancestral home of the family is held by W. O. Foster, Esq., Lord of the Manor, whose property surrounds it; but the ownership is retained by the Baker family.

Near to the old Baker mansion is the ancestral home of the Bromleys, who, some tell us, had their rise at Bromley Regis, Staffordshire; but who, from the evidence adduced here and elsewhere in this little book on Worfield, it will I think be clear, sprang from this township. Like the Baker mansion, the old house has a despondent look about it, but more care seems to have been taken of it. It has a gable at the one end looking in the same direction as the front, and is seemingly more modern, but in outside appearance only, for on going inside, particularly into the bedrooms, it is found to be as heavily timbered as the other, and is as antiquated in appearance. The windows are inserted partly in the roof, which comes down nearly to the floor; in the lower rooms they have stone mullions; some of the old ones are blocked up and new ones cut. The chimneys are of monstrous size where they start from the lower storey, and occupy a space which might serve for a small room.

One divides into two stacks, and the other into three, above the roof. The front doorway is arched and ornamental, and the old door, studded with nails after the fashion of former times, still remains. Over the windows are stone mouldings, and running along the building are string-courses of stone. The walls as seen in the cellar are over a yard in thickness, and the solid rock forms the floor, in which there is a spring. Over one of the beds is a singular door in the wall, now closed up, the use of which it would be difficult to divine; a trap-door also opens into a recess in the pitch of the roof, where a priest at one time is said to have been concealed.

It was here, tradition tells us, that the ancestors of Lord Chief Justice Bromley lived, and that that great family had its rise: and I think tradition in this case is correct, for the Worfield parish annals show that from very early times, and for many generations, they held such offices as respectable yeomen would be called upon to fill. As early as 1256, at the January Assizes, Reginald de Bromley is mentioned as Bailiff of Wurefeld, with twelve jurors. Robert Bromley appears on a Worfield jury in 1292. He married Alice, sole heir of Gilbert, and their son, who was called William de Roughton, appeared as forester of the fee at the Great Perambulation in the year 1300, when Roughton was said to be within the forest. That this William de Roughton was in reality a Bromley, fraternally, appears clear from the fact that when she (Alice) died, April 1st, 1306, and the King's writ was issued, and an inquest *post-mortem* held on Sunday, May 16th, at Brug, it was reported that deceased had held in Worfield by service of "keeping a part of Morfe Forest, viz., that part where was the site of the Manor of Worfield, that her tenure consisted of 30 acres of land; also that William, her son and next heir, would be 50 years of age at Christmas, 1305." According to an inquisition of 10th Edward II., No. 19, William de Roughton died December 15, 1316; and the jury, who sat at Worfield, found him to have held by serjeantry of keeping one-half of the forest of Morfe. His tenure was also shown to be half a *virgate* (30 acres) and a rood of meadow ground. His brother and heir, Roger, succeeded him, and his death is announced under the name of Roger de Bromleye, September 28, 1318; he

was succeeded by his son and heir, William. In 1345 a license enables William de Bromley, forester, to grant to Walter le Fitz Reginald, of the Hay, and his wife, daughter of the said William, in tail, a messuage and half a virgate in Roughton, and the bailiwick of half the forestership of Morfe, towards Worfield.

It would occupy too much space to go fully into all the facts concerning the history of this interesting family; suffice it to say that they rose by the Law; like the Howards, the Fortesques, Lyttletons, Townshends, Montagues, and Bridgemans, which last family, now represented by the Earl of Bradford, benefited by their wealth, through Sir Richard Newport, who married Martha, only daughter and heiress of Lord Chief Justice Sir Thomas Bromley, Knight, by which marriage he acquired the manor of Eyton, "a fair house on the banks of the river," and other estates in the neighbourhood. Sir Thomas purchased Shrawardine Castle and Manor from the Earl of Arundel, and made a settlement thereof on his heirs, 25th Elizabeth, having obtained the Queen's license to do so. He lies buried with his wife in the church at Wroxeter, where there is a marble monument to their memory, with recumbent figures, bearing the following inscription: 'Here lyethe Sir Thomas Bromley, Knyght, which dyed, beyng Lord Chyffe Justice of England, also beyng one of the executors to the Kyng, of most famous memorye, Henry the Eyghtthe, whyche desesed the xv. day of May, anno dni, 1555; and Dame Isabel, hys wyfe, the whyche desesed in the yere of our Lord . . . . on whose sowles God av mer—.'

Sir George Bromley, son of William Bromley, of Hawkstone, was tenth in descent from Walter Bromley, of Bromley, and by his eldest son, Sir George Bromley, Chief Justice of Chester, and *Custos Rotulorum* of Shropshire (seated at Hallon, by marrying the heiress of Wannerton), was grandfather of Sir Edmund Bromley, of Shifnal Grange, Baron of the Exchequer, and great-grandfather of Jane, wife of William Davenport, of whom I shall have more to say when speaking of Hallon and Davenport House. The magnificent monuments of Sir George and Sir Edward Bromley the reader will find described on page 31, and the inscriptions given on page 39.

CHAPTER XI.

BATCH POOLS, BENTLEY, and BARNSLEY.

BATCH POOLS is the name given to a little vale near to Burcote. It has a villa-like residence which—influenced by the beauties of the place—a retired bullion dealer erected in which to end his days. A pleasant sprinkling of cottages of older date also peep out among the trees, but so modest and natural looking as to suggest the idea that they had grown there. In the trough of the valley, fed by a whimpering stream—which constantly grows less as agricultural improvement advances—are the two pools which give their name to the place. These, and a bold bit of rock crowned by a group of Scotch firs, whose dark foliage affords a contrast with the prevailing tone around, are the characteristic features. A gentleman who accompanied me, said it was a favourite walk of his, and to a lover of nature inclined to thought or inspired by ballad or fireside story of rustic peace, contentment, and humble virtue, nothing could be more congenial.

BARNSLEY and BENTLEY.—Barnsley is two miles south, and Bentley two miles south-west of Worfield church. Of these there is little to say, excepting that they are townships which formerly supplied their contingent to the municipal government of the parish, and that old names and memories yet linger around them. Among them are the Croxtons, an old family who, as far as I know, have no representatives of the name here at present; but whose arms were as follows: *Sa.* a chevron, betw. three cocks, *arg.*, combed, and wattled. *gu.* Benedicta, only child of William Croxton, and granddaughter of Thomas Croxton (by Anna, his wife, daughter of William Davenport) married John Purton, son of John Purton, of Hallon and Barnsley, June 25th, 1635. Their son, Josiah Purton, born at Barnsley, 1640, lived at Oldington; but died at Hallon,

January 20th, 1726. Their grandson, William Purton, of Eudon, baptized at Oldbury, January 14th, 1686. (the first of the family who wrote his name *Purton*) married Sarah, daughter of Matthias Astley, of Madeley. He lived some time at Madeley Court; but afterwards built the pleasant-looking villa, now the property of Miss Smith, and resided there. He died at Eudon, 1740, leaving issue from whom came the Purtons of Chetton and Faintree Hall, Bridgnorth.

The Purtons are a very old family, and their names occur often in connection with nearly every township of the parish. One of the earliest notices tells us that they held the towns of Perton and Trescott in Staffordshire, being bound to attend the king in any Welsh expedition with two horses for eight days at their own cost, but if they remained longer, then at the king's cost; and that a daughter of Ranulph de Perton married Sir Hugh de Wrottesley (from whom descended the present baron) and that his son John de Perton, Lord of Perton, died, seized thereof, 42nd. Henry III. His two sons, dying unmarried, were succeeded by his brother William, who died 8. Edward I., leaving one daughter, Isabel, who married William, lord of Bentley, and one son and heir, John de Perton, lord of Perton, 28 Edward II., who left two sons, John and William. The latter succeeded his elder brother, and died 3 Edward III, leaving one son and heir, Sir John, knighted at the Siege of Calais in 1346, by King Edward III; he was Sheriff of Staffordshire 33, 44 and 45 Edward III, and married Elizabeth, daughter and co-heiress of Sir William de Shareshull, Co. Stafford, Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench; Walter, his second son, married Margery de Styrchley, and lived at Stirchley, 16 Edward III. Walter de Perton, Acolyte, son of John Perton, was instituted here at the presentation of the Prior and Convent of Wenlock; and Sir Walter de Perton, of Stirchley, died here on Sunday, February 22nd, 1349. Dukes says, "a fine was levied 12 Henry III, between Osbert, son of William, complainant, and Walter de Stirchley, defendant, of one hide of land." His sons disposed of all their lands at Perton to Sir H. Stafford, 12 and 19 Richard II. There is a wood in this parish still called Perton's wood. Further mention of this family will be made in speaking of other townships.

CHAPTER XII.

BRADNEY.

Fishing streams and stations—The Bradney, Billingsley, Congreve and Marshall Families.

BRADNEY, half a mile south-east of Worfield church, has for ages been the paradise of anglers. It is graced by two trout streams, which modern disciples of Isaac Walton are pleased to patronise. They come from busy towns many miles away, put up at the "Wheel-o-Worvill," or the Davenport Arms, and stride off to taste "free nature's grace" on the flower dotted and sedgy bank of the quiet stream. These were valuable properties in former times (probably much more so then than now), when fish were deemed so essential to the observance of certain seasons of the Church. One is the River Worfe; the other is Stratford Brook. The former comes down through the picturesque scenery of Evelith, Hinnington, Ryton, Badger, and Stableford, and making a turn at Hallon's ford, enters Bradney. Its tributary has its origin in the overflowings of Patshull Pool, and is powerful enough, by the time it enters Worfield parish, to turn Chesterton Mill, formerly a fulling mill, when homely shuttles were busy in the vale and coarse cloth was woven in the cottages. It takes a turn round the "Old Walls," winds through most romantic scenery, crosses the old Roman Road, from which it derives its name, and leaping over rocks, or running leisurely over sandy beds, empties itself into the Worfe. A valuation of the manor of Worfield, made by order of the King (1238, or some time between then and 1250), when the first Henry de Hastings was Lord of the Manor, gives statistical information as to the value of these streams, as compared with land, cattle, etc. It gives the value of 60 acres of land as £3 15s., and the pasturage of 500 sheep at ½d. per head per

annum, and two mills at £7 6s. 8d. It mentions eight small fisheries, called "stakings," five of which are said to be at Bradney, but it does not give their value, neither does it say whether they were on the river or the brook.

The early families of Bradney were heads of their township; and we read of one who six centuries ago accompanied the Provost of Worfield to the Assizes at Shrewsbury; and again at the county assizes held there in October, 1292, when Henry Pycott was Chief Bailiff of Worfield Nicholas Bradney is mentioned as one of the jurors. Skipping over intervening centuries we find the estate passed into the hands of the Billingsleys, one of whom, William, was of Cann Hall, Bridgnorth, and afterwards of Ludstone, in the neighbouring parish of Claverley. He purchased of the Crown the Manor of Astley Abbotts in 1546. The family also had property in Worfield parish. In the 14th Elizabeth, the Court Rolls of the Manor show that John Yate, of Stanlowe, surrendered to William Billingsley one messuage, and the fourth part of a nook of land there, besides three cottages in Hallon. This property in the 7th of James I. he seems to have surrendered to Thomas, son of William Billingsley the elder, in fee. Other presentments and surrenderings appear on these rolls in connection with this family in the 16th of Charles I. and 18th of Charles II., at which latter date Henry Billingsley is shown to have married a Rowley, of Brockton, and, 33rd of Charles II., to have surrendered the reversion of property in Stanlowe to Richard Phillips, gent., of Brockton, in fee. Thomas Billingsley was born in 1698. He married Miss Taylor, sister of Jeremiah Taylor, M.A., vicar of Madeley, who built the present vicarage, and cast the present peal of bells, in a foundry erected for the purpose, in the churchyard. He died at Madeley and was buried there April 7, 1728; his wife was also interred there, January 24, 1735. Margaret, only surviving child of Thomas Billingsley, of Bradney, and Mary Taylor his wife, married William Congreve, M.D., of Sutton Maddock, who died at Bradney, and was buried at Worfield, July 20, 1776. His widow continued to live at Bradney, and died there October 19, 1809.

Thus Bradney came to the Congreves. One, John Congreve, was a solicitor at Bridgnorth, and a sister, Mary Congreve, married the Rev. Robert Binnall; whilst Abigail Congreve married Thomas Marshall, whose son John lived at Bradney. His son, the Rev. William Congreve Marshall, was born at Upper Ludstone, Claverly. Abigail Marshall married Vice-Admiral Brazier, R.N. (first wife), whose second wife was Miss Burton, sister, I think, of the Rev. Henry Burton, of Longnor, and who at the decease of the Admiral in 1864, continued to enjoy the property till her death in 1877. James Marshall, brother of John, a solicitor at Roughton, married a Miss Jesson, and died without children. Ann Marshall, married the Rev. William Ellison, vicar of Pattingham, and had issue William George Ellison, John Montague Ellison, Charles Ellison (who married Mrs. Wynne Jones, and died at Oldbury), and, fourthly, a daughter, who was the mother of the present proprietor, Captain Goodwin.

Bradney house is situated in a sweetly retired spot; just the place an English gentleman would choose in which to spend the eventide of life. On the slopes are shrubs and trees of great age and rarity. Auracarias sweep the ground with snake-like branches, and flourish as if indigenous to the place. The Wellingtonia gigantea finds a congenial soil, and the Arboretum vitæ, the magnolia, the mulberry, the silver ash, the copper beech, the myrtle, and the variegated hollies, lend variety. The present proprietor has done much to improve both house and grounds since he came into possession. The rooms are replete with comfort and luxury, and contain some interesting family paintings; also some praiseworthy efforts of the gallant Captain himself, and some excellent engravings of well-known pictures.

CHAPTER XIII.

CATSTREE.

The Catstreys, Deveys, Nicholls, etc.

CATSTREE is an ancient township one and a half miles north-west of Worfield village, and is much less as regards population than formerly. There are two farms: one east, but close to the road passing through it, belonging to E. H. Davenport, Esq., and the other on the west to W. O. Foster, Esq., who is Lord of the Manor; but both are in one holding; and I don't think there are more than two or three cottages. These small clusters of houses were townships, not so much for the number of dwellers therein, as by virtue of their interest and power to take part in the municipal governing body or corporation directing the affairs of the manor or parish. They supplied petty officers, such as constables, "ale-tasters," and jurors who sat with the reeve or bailiff of the court to hear and try cases in the Manor Court and at the Assize, and were subject to the Leet. The Catstreys are mentioned in parish records as constables or churchwardens in the years 1511, 1519, and 1562. Roger Cattystrye was churchwarden for the Chantry in 1571, John Cattstry in 1519; and the same in 1562. The old family of the Deveys, whose names occur in connection with various other townships, had holdings here. William Devey, described as husbandman, who married Margaret Rowley, was appointed "ale-taster" by the Manorial Court in 1661. He is mentioned as surrendering to the Court certain premises to the use of his son and heir, Roger Devey, in fee, who at the same court surrendered these premises to the use of himself and Elizabeth his wife, one of the daughters of John Smythe, of Hilton, renewed to their issue. In the register for May 30th, 1686, appears the marriage of the above.

Catstree was the residence of Thomas Nicholls, solicitor, widely known as "Lawyer Nicholls of Catstree." He was a man with a

presence, being tall and portly, and of a most irascible temper, but kind hearted, and very hospitable. He had one son, Mr. Samuel Nicholls, who was an early pupil of the late Dr. Rowley, of the Grammar School, Bridgnorth, and finished his education at Oxford. About two-thirds of the more modern portion of the house, now belonging to Mr. Foster, was built by the late Mr. Nicholls, together with the offices used in his profession. The part of the original building still remaining is now the kitchen. It is half-timbered, and may therefore have been the former home of the Catstrees when, at that early date, this small holding was nearly surrounded by the common of Sowdley, a name still continued for some of the fields. That portion which the Whitmore family claimed was brought into cultivation by the late Mr. Nicholls, whose father had resided there before him. When he succeeded his father in the legal profession he married Miss Caroline Duppa, of Bridgnorth, and their eldest son is the present Mr. Samuel Thomas Nicholls, of Parlors Hall, Bridgnorth, also a solicitor. They had another son who died in 1882, and one daughter, still unmarried. The only daughter of Mr. Nicholls, of Catstree, married the late Mr. Thomas Smith, of Bromley, J.P. She survived her husband, and resides in East Castle Street, Bridgnorth, with her two only daughters. The youngest, Emily Stedman, married in 1883, Mr. Edward Devey Farmer, a descendant of the Deveys of Kingslow.

CHAPTER XIV.

CRANMERE.

The Cranberry and Cranberry mere—A parson and sportsman, and an unsuccessful wooer—Romantic marriage and tragic incident.

WHETHER this name originated in a mere, where cranes congregated, or in Cranberry mere—the mere around which on a boggy soil this much prized berry of our ancestors grew in plenty, I leave the reader to judge. Old inhabitants remember the mere being drained and reduced to the present duck-pool, by which it is said this once indigenous fruit was driven into extinction. It was much used by our ancestors for making a sauce of excellent flavour, as well as for tarts. A low-roofed shepherd's cot which originally stood on the edge of this rough ground, part bog and part a sandy common, still survives, and is seen pretty much in its original condition by the roadside near Hartlebury. There are pleasant old world stories current respecting Cranmere. It was the property of Miss Tongue, a lady whose hand was sought by many suitors, one of whom was rector of Badger, the Rev. W. Smith, a gentleman who although a model clergyman who never missed a service it is said once in forty years, was not one of those bilious members of the profession "who spit their spite at harmless recreation," but one who was equally punctual in following the hounds, when "Hark in! Hark! Yoi over boys!" sounded within miles of his home, on two days a week, at least. He found it however much more difficult to woo the fair owner of Cranmere, successfully; for she became the wife of the grandfather of the present squire of Davenport House, a marriage which brought the Cranmere property into the hands of the Davenports. Miss Tongue was related to Mr. Cornelius Tongue, the author of *Records of the Chase*, who wrote many spirited articles in the *Sporting Magazine* of those days, under the *nom de plume* of "Cecil."

A still later association may be mentioned as connected with Cranmere; it was the residence of that popular and highly-respected sportsman, Valentine Vickers, Esq. Some few persons, but very few indeed, at this distance of time, remember in the old days of the Morfe Coursing Club Mrs. Valentine Vickers mounted on a blood horse, with her very good-looking niece, Margaret Miller, by her side, forming a conspicuous point of interest in the sporting assemblage who then sought the pleasure of the chase, the fresh air, and the beautiful scenes presented by Morfe forest, which but recently enclosed, formed part of the parish of Worfield. Mr. Vickers was brother of Archdeacon Vickers, rector of Chetton, near Bridgnorth; and, as related, had been unsuccessful in his suit with a young lady, who never married afterwards, and whose hand he sought in vain. Highly disappointed, and as if bent on affording another illustration of the fact that the fickle god plays queer pranks with us mortals, as he was returning home on horseback, he noticed at the door of a labourer's cottage on the road in Astley Abbots parish, an interesting child: a thought struck him, and he reined up his horse, and a parley took place with the girl's parents. Mr. Vickers offered to educate her, and afterwards make her his wife. This unexpected proposal caused some hesitation, the parents doubting the *bona-fides* of the unknown gentleman, and they refused point blank to consent, whatever fortune might be in store. As the real incidents of life are often more singular than those of fiction, journeying onwards and crossing the Severn, with somewhat disappointed and agitated feelings at the frustration of his pure and honourable intentions, when near the toll-gate in Worfield parish, he met with a fall from his horse, which might have had a fatal ending but for the prompt assistance of a gipsy girl, whom on his recovery he married. His wife's niece, Miss Miller, mentioned above, he placed at school, and she resided some years at Cranmere with Mr. and Mrs. Vickers. Mrs. Vickers and her eldest niece, well mounted, often attended the coursing meetings upon Morfe. It was her wont to attend Bridgnorth races in their palmy days, in her carriage drawn by four dashing ponies, which she drove herself. The youngest niece of Mrs. Vickers married Richard Phillips, Esq., of Brockton, and Miss

Margaret Miller, her eldest sister, whose horsemanship, good looks and amiability gained for her many admirers, was married to a country gentleman, named Macefield and, as her dower, the beautiful estate of Ellerton Grange was settled by Mr. Vickers in reversion.

Mr. Vickers afterwards removed from Cranmere, and when some years of companionship had passed, the wife of this romantic marriage, who if lowly born had made him a true and attached wife, met her death near Newport, whilst endeavouring to leave her carriage, being unable to control her four spirited ponies, which had run away. It was a sad ending. Mr. and Mrs. Vickers had no family, but though Mr. Vickers was advancing in life he afterwards married a lady of position, and had two sons by his second marriage. Cranmere is still a pleasant residence, with extensive lawn, and is approached by a drive through a grove of trees. It is now a farm-house, and over the door is a Latin quotation from Virgil, which, freely translated, is, "O husbandmen, too fortunate, if you only knew your happiness."

CHAPTER XV.

CHESTERTON.

Old Chesterton Families.—The Baches, Marindins, Newes, and Bradburns.—Roman remains.

ON entering Chesterton two pleasant looking residences meet the eye, on opposite sides of the road. One is the ancestral home of the Marindins and the other that of the Baches; but the latter is now occupied by Mr. Bowen, tenant of John Pritchard, Esq., who bought the property. The Baches and Marindins were the dominant families; but the former are as extinct, so far as this township and parish are concerned, as the dodo of the Mauritius. In the chantry of Worfield church is a tablet with this inscription: "I.H.S. Sacred to the memory of Elizabeth Bache, spinster, who departed this life 17th Feb., 1858, aged 77 years: she was unmarried, for forty years the faithful servant of the Rev. Wm. Smith, rector of Badger," etc. The Baches of Chesterton were descended from an old family in this township of the name of Newe, from whom they inherited the Chesterton estate, now the property of John Pritchard, Esq. The name occurs frequently in old Worfield records. John Newe is found among the churchwardens, with Roger Rowlowe, in 1502. In 1506 I find Richard Newe, of Chesterton, as warden, and again in 1660 and 1661. The name of Bache also frequently occurs among the churchwardens. In 1636 I find John Bache and Richard Rowley; and the year following John Bache and Thomas Bache. The social position of the family might be inferred from the fact that they intermarried with the Davenports of Hallon and Davenport House. The last of the family, Madame La Viscomptesse de Satgé St. Jean, author of "Sketches and Extracts from a Travelling Journal," and "The Cave of the Huguenots, a tale of the XVII century, and other poems," died not very long ago.

The Bradburns were also an old Chesterton family. Thomas Bradburn was born here, and died here in 1658. His son, John Bradburn, of Chesterton, married Judith, daughter of John Walker, of Roughton, and died there December 19th, 1728. Their son, Thomas Bradburn, also of Chesterton, was the Rev. Thomas Bradburn, the rector of Wolstanton. Thomas had a son John, who lived at Chesterton, and his daughter Sarah married Thomas Mason, who died at Hatton Grange; having no children, the Chesterton estate descended to the son of Mary Ann Bradburn's third daughter, Catherine Louisa, who married Samuel Marindin, son of a Swiss gentleman. Their son, the Rev. Samuel Marindin married Isabella, daughter of Andrew Wedderburn Colvile, of Ochiltree, whose mother was a daughter of the first Lord Auckland. Catherine Louisa, sister of Samuel, married Sherrington Davenport, whose son, Edmund Henry, is the present Davenport Squire. The Rev. Samuel Marindin, above-mentioned, had a son Henry, barrister-at-law, and a second son, Captain Philip Marindin, and a third, Major Frank Marindin, who married Kathleen, daughter of Sir William Stevenson; there was also a fourth son, Charles, who married a Miss Jackson.

Few of the inhabitants of Chesterton are aware, I fancy, of the fact that their ancestors had a chapel here; yet such was the interest taken by the feudal lords of Worfield and its townships, that they appear to have been careful to make provision for the spiritual wants of the population, when the old faith was in the ascendant. Mr. Bowen called my attention to this building, now two cottages which, it is easy to perceive, had been built for a chapel. It looks odd, with its moulded oriel looking window cases, reaching above the doorway. According to the original endowment, dated Nov. 1., 1394, the oblations of this chapel and "the tithes of all sorts of grain of the village, and all tithes of workmen, artificers," etc., were given to the Vicar, who was to serve the chapel, and who in 1534-5 did serve it, and received the great tithes of this township. The oblations amounted to 18s., in 1534-5, when John Walker was Vicar; the corn tithes to £5; and oblations for three days—Christmas Day, Ascension Day, and Whit Sunday, probably when the people made

offerings—amounted to 14s. ; and geese, young swine," etc., offerings in kind—to £1 13s. 4d. ; in candles 23s. 2d."

In those primitive times, when the inhabitants spun and wove and dressed their own cloth, Chesterton had its fulling mill. 43, Edward III, 1369, Julia late Countess of Huntingdon, who held the Manor as her dower, demised to Roger de Kyngslowe one place of waste to erect a fulling mill, paying at the fixed courts of Worfield 12d. This fulling mill appears to have been converted into a paper mill, for in Oct. 1734, there is an entry of Thomas Bache surrendering a fulling mill, then a paper mill.

We pass now to the great attraction which brings visitors to Chesterton, "the Old Walls," so called, but which in reality are no walls at all, but earth-mounds, and which have been said to be the starting point of Worfield history. They certainly lead us back to a period anterior to anything still standing in the parish. They occupy an enclosure which covers some 24 or 25 acres, and around are pleasant walks, kept in order for visitors. The trenches are deep and distinct, and in some places have been cut through the rock, much like the supposed Danish encampment at Quatford. The rocks are of the same formation, and reach below the trench to the brook, which could readily be dammed up, to add to the strength of the position. One group of rocks below the lowest of the trenches is so shattered that a stream runs through the cleft, and one could imagine gunpowder had been used, but for the fact that the people who constructed the defences lived centuries before such a powerful explosive was discovered. Who they were who fixed upon the spot, and laboured to make a strong position still stronger, no one knows; they must have gone to rest nearly a thousand years ago. Three sides are defended by the stream running through a circuitous valley, which bears the appearance of having been excavated. Four entrances or approaches in the ramparts are visible. That on the village side is guarded by artificial mounds, one of which is known as "Spy Bank;" and here, it is presumed, sentinels would be placed to give alarm on the approach of danger. Of these entrances, that on the north-west is supposed to have been made for the horses to go to water,

the ground being made to slope in the direction of the brook. It is supposed to have been a Roman Camp ; but it might have been an early British one too, being afterwards occupied and modified by the Romans. Charles Hartshorne M.A., says in his *Salopia Antiqua:* "Examining still closer the method which the Britons pursued in constructing their walls of defence, it may be seen that they were generally formed of loose stones, according to the description that Tacitus has left of their mode of building fortifications. Now in the example before us may be detected an adherance to all those general laws which regulated their principles of castrametation. For besides the situation being precisely such a one as the British would choose, there is moreover a manifest conformity to all their usual rules of construction. Thus we find on the western side of the enclosed area, where the descent is gradual, and an assault would most probably be made, the natural weakness of the ground is compensated for by having a fosse and vallum drawn round the most pregnable part of the declivity for upwards of a hundred yards. Whilst, if we look at the materials with which the vallum that surrounds the whole enclosure is formed, we find it consists of pieces of the sand-stone-rock that forms the geological basis of the hill. These facts indirectly tend to show that the work is of British origin."

CHAPTER XVI.

DAVENPORT HOUSE AND PARK.

Exterior view of the house—Interior of the mansion—Rare woods, family paintings etc.—Woods, wood walks, and park.

DAVENPORT HOUSE is built of red brick, with stone copings and a parapet wall, on which are placed at intervals vases or urns, which add lightness and serve to give an appearance of additional elevation to the building. The windows, of which there are 33 on the north side, and the same number on the south, including six in the basement, have stone mouldings; and between the second and third storeys is a handsome stone frieze cornice, giving relief to what might otherwise appear too plain a surface. It is oblong in shape, rather than square, and on the north side—that of the approach from the drive—is a flight of stone steps, with portico, leading into a spacious entrance hall. At the corners of the mansion, but at some distance, though still connected with it by fly-walls, forming the segment of a circle, are square buildings or wings, corresponding with each other and harmonising in form with the house. Excepting the windows, these are perfectly covered over with ivy, which, being kept neat and trim, by its everlasting greenness forms a pleasing feature, at the same time that it gives prominence to the house, and is in character with the summer foliage of the trees on the grounds and in the park. In the south front of the houses is a similar flight of steps to those on the other side, but without a portico, leading into parterres and flower gardens, divided from the lawn, in the centre of which is a miniature lake supplied with water from the Worfe.

The interior of the mansion is as noteworthy as its exterior; and is as remarkable for its arrangements for comfort as for strength, durability, etc. Without hazarding an opinion on matters on which

others would be better judges, I venture to repeat the opinion of a lady who writes me thus:—"I do not know a mansion combining so many advantages as Davenport; being one in which either a large or a small family could live with equal comfort."

It was built in 1726-7, by Henry, grandson of William Davenport (who married Jane Bromley), on a more eligible site and at a very short distance from the very ancient mansion in which the former lords of Hallon lived. I may mention in parenthesis that this Henry's eldest brother, as stated in the parish register, was "a major-general and coll. of a regiment of horse, formerly aide-de-camp to Prince Vaudemont, one of the quirrys (equerries) to his late Majesty King William, a captain of his first troop of Horse Guards, and died in Dublin, 4th of ye month, and was buried ye 6th of August, 1719." Henry, the above-mentioned second son, when quite a young man, went out to India, where he amassed a large fortune, which he is said to have brought home in two large chests, which for many years used to stand in the hall; and which are now at the foot of the grand staircase. In addition to wealth in precious metals he brought or sent home a collection of Indian woods of rare and costly kinds. The saloon is richly decorated with these finely-grained woods, which appear in panels, cornices, etc; and even the floor is inlaid with them. They are relieved on the walls by decorations, and upholstered with white and gold. Wisely, and according to the fitness of things, there are no paintings, excepting one in a panel over the fireplace, a gem of art in itself, the subject being Gratiana Rodd the great beauty of George III's time, whom Beau Nash praised and Shenstone eulogised. This room is opposite to the entrance hall, and a door opens on to the lawn and parterres. In the dining room is a massive Queen Anne chimney-piece of panelled woods, and carved figures in *alto relievo* on either side, with fruits, and scrolls, and a swarthy-looking human head, *couped* with the usual conspicuous gold halter round the neck, an emblem of powers of life and death conferred on early members of the Davenport family. This room is rich in family portraits, and in one of the pictures the above lady again appears, represented as a happy

mother looking down upon her infant. It is one of those sweet little pictures such as Sir Joshua Reynolds was wont to paint, full of maternal expression and womanly sentiment, but whether the work of that eminent artist or not I cannot say. There is another painting of her with her husband, Sherrington Davenport, and his half-brother, forming a group. She appears again as an old woman of 70 in another picture; also in a marble bust over the fireplace in the small dining-room. There are two remarkably fine full-length paintings of the daughter, who seems to have inherited her mother's graces of face and form. In one by a Dutch artist, she appears as Miss Davenport, in the character of a shepherdess, with crook, etc. In another she is painted as she appeared a few years later, when Mrs. Mytton, in full-developed sumptuousness. It is really an interesting study to compare the two pictures, as representing maidenhood and womanhood, and the development of one into the other. Both appear, if I remember rightly, in a blue dress. The story connected with the adventures of the latter picture is remarkable. It had by some means been lost, and was discovered 30 years ago in Herefordshire, in a pigeon-house, where it had been used as a target! It was found by an old friend of the family, the Rev. Dr. Symonds, of Hereford, who, knowing its value, rescued it, and sent it to the present squire's father, who had it restored and put among the other family paintings in the dining-room. The patchings and hole-stoppings are visible when looked at closely; but the artist has succeeded admirably in his work of restoration. In this room is a portrait of Judge Bromley; and in the entrance hall, over the fireplace is a large fine painting of Mary Queen of Scots, whose death he advocated, not the most creditible act of his life, in the opinion of his descendants. Opposite the staircase is a painting of the Shropshire sporting squire, W. Y. Davenport, a jolly, full-fed specimen of the squirearchy of the period.

The staircase, which is a handsome structure of two flights, was designed and built by the architect who erected the one at Lord Leigh's, Stoneleigh Abbey. On the entrance to the gallery to which it leads, and again at its base, are very fine collections of birds of New Guinea and Australia, brought over by the present squire in

1875—a date indicating the time of his return from the colony the second time, when he married the present Mrs. Davenport. A very fine picture of still-life, by Peter Rushock, stands near the first of these cases.

Westwards of the lawn and parterres are the gardens, conservatories, and terraces; reached by a descent from one of the latter, which separates the ornamental portion of the grounds from the park, the whole—that is, the grounds surrounding the house—have a very pleasing effect. Taking in the different coloured shrubs, copper beeches, evergreen oaks, cedars, and other trees, the place has an appearance befitting the residence of a nobleman of taste. In the immediate vicinity are remarkably fine specimens of oaks, cedars, limes, Scotch pines, and beeches—each a picture in itself. The beeches rise in clusters of pillared branches, some equal to an ordinary tree, and so old that in a few may be detected signs of incipient decay. Those who may be privileged to ambulate these woods and wood-walks—if open to such inspiration as the highest forms of natural beauty have a tendency to produce—should take their stand on the terrace west of the house, which commands a view of what is generally designated "Little Switzerland." Views are here obtained of the Burcote and other rocks, with embowering woods which clothe the valley sides; whilst beyond, the sharp but distance-softened outlines of the Clee Hills appear. Knowing that in old Squire Davenport's time this was a deer park, one finds it difficult not to imagine bucks or does or fawns grazing on patches of open greensward, or lazily lying where heaths and ferns and foxgloves flourish—adding variety to the scenery.

The house being placed nearly in the centre, and on a natural kind of peninsula, with valleys on three sides, the prospect around is as beautiful as one can well imagine. The Worfe is seen meandering, sparkling, and reflecting the blue sky as it winds its way along the vale to its confluence with the Severn. For the greater part of the way a road runs parallel by its side, apparently hemming in the traveller, having no way visible till points have been reached round which the passage winds. One should not omit to notice one pretty little view contrived by him, whoever he was, who planted the trees

—a sort of *camera obscura* view, caused by an avenue east of the house, in which the tall and elegant spire of Worfield Church meets the eye, and is about the only object seen. It is the private walk of the family to church, and in its course it passes over a deep cutting in the rocks by means of a structure called the "Chinese Bridge." There are other avenues, and drives, and wood walks, so contrived as to command the most picturesque portions of the grounds and views beyond. With this pardonable exception, the grounds have not, it will be seen, been formed by line and rule. Nature is not banished in order to display artificial scenes; but rather is taken advantage of, and made to show her highest charms. Pope laid down true principles on the subject which, divested of the charms of poetry, consisted of these precepts—1st, to study nature; 2nd, to display her beauties and conceal her defects; 3rd, to consult the genius of the place. In the arrangement of Davenport grounds, Shenstone—who was consulted by Mr. Davenport—appears to have reduced these rules of his brother poet to practice; he has taken care that the most indifferent observer shall get unconfined views over ridge and valley, lawn and wood, with the most distant prospects. Of the Davenport family more will be said under Hallon, in which township stood the former mansion.

The House and grounds are in the occupation of Sir Augustus Addeiley, K.C.M.G. to whose courtesy I am indebted for the opportunity of making these observations.

CHAPTER XVII.

EWDNESS.

Extensive prospect—The Berkleys and Barnfields.

EWDNESS is two and half miles north-east of the village of Worfield; it is seen on the west of the Bridgnorth road, and stands on a ridge of sandstone, which immediately dips into a hollow in which is a lake, and then rises into the high grounds of Apley Park and terrace. A magnificent prospect opens up in front of the house, of woods, fields, farms, villages, and churches, the horizon being bounded by the lofty ridge of Sedgeley Beacon, the Clent, and other hills. A former tenant tells me that by the aid of a glass he has counted 16 spires and towers, including Dudley and the Collegiate Church of St. Peter, Wolverhampton. The house is built of red brick, excepting the wings, which are of stone, quarried from beds which underlie the surface; and at each end are ornamental chimneys of stone and moulded bricks combined, such as are seen in Elizabethan houses. The windows have stone mullions and iron stanchions, similar to houses of the Tudor period. The front entrance opens from a step above the grounds, and the doorway has heavy jambs and lintels with massive projections, which might at one time have been more ornate than at present. The entrance is into a capacious hall, much in the style of old country mansions: and the dining and drawing rooms, in the east wing on the right, are also large. The former is wainscoted to the ceiling with fine old oak, panelled and carved; but it is only when opening the doors of the recesses that it is seen, a former tenant having had the bad taste to cover it over with oil paint. The moulded and ornamental supports of the ceiling have fortunately been spared this desecration, and are preserved and varnished. The bedrooms are wainscoted, but one of these has been papered over; in another the oak panelling is entire.

It has been preserved, probably, from the fact that each panel has painted in its centre a single white flower, the work of some early artist. Even the attics, used as storerooms, are wainscoted round; the floors, too, are of oak. Other indications tend to show that the house was built when oak was plentiful and trees were cultivated not only for their timber but for food for hogs. Old mansions of this period, frequently had texts of Scripture cut or moulded and fixed in conspicuous places. Ewdness is no exception; Mrs. Pugh, wife of the present tenant, who kindly showed me over the house, produced a broken plaque which the workmen found under the plaster on the stairs, in making alterations five years ago. It was of baked clay, and had been incised with the words:– "Blessed is the man that feareth."

The kitchen is large, but the fireplace has been reduced: previously it was open, and large enough to roast a sheep or a good fat buck. There appears to have been a tower near the east wing, where there are lancet windows. It might have been a bell-tower, or one used for purposes of observation and defence when Morfe Forest was infested by marauders and outlaws who made occasional onslaughts on their neighbours. I examined the cellars with a candle, and it appeared to me that part of the present walls might have been the foundation of an earlier structure, and that the workmen had utilised them and spliced them on to the present building. Mr. Barnfield tells me that the roof was formerly covered with limestone slabs, such as are seen at Buildwas Abbey, and that the rafters rose considerably when relieved of their great weight. The house buildings are said to have been much more extensive formerly, and to have included brewing, baking premises, etc. This probably was so when, during the Civil Wars, a former tenant kept a troop of horse here, and the walls were wont to resound to the sounds of martial music.

Ewdness is mentioned in Domesday, and in the latter end of the twelfth and beginning of the fourteenth centuries, and the names of the tenants are given. They held it by serjeantry, the service being that the tenant should accompany the sheriff of the county when,

twice a year, he conveyed the ferm or revenue of Shropshire to the exchequer, a not very onerous duty—supposing the guard strong enough to ensure safety—considering that the king paid the tenant's charges for his trouble. Walter d'Eudinas held the manor of the king, and was summoned as a juror to try causes of grand assize at Salop in 1221; he is also spoken of as attesting a deed at Badger in 1227. Later on notices of Ralph d'Eudinas, and Nicholas, clerk of Eudinas, occur. It appears that here, as in similar cases, the family in possession took its name from the place. From the Ewdness family it passed to the Haslewoods, of Oldington, one of whom married, in the reign of Henry IV., the daughter and heiress of Richard de Ewdness, son of Robert, younger son of Robert, lord of Ewdness, and from them passed to a Mr. Fletcher, who is supposed to have built the present house. Mr. Fletcher had three daughters, co-heiresses, one of whom married Mr. Berkeley, a member of Parliament, it is said, either for the county or for one of the boroughs of Shropshire. He seems to have been a man of some standing, as he is said to have had a troop of horse at Ewdness during the Parliamentary war. In the chancel of Worfield Church was a monument to Francis, son of Thomas Berkeley, with the following inscription:—

Sub marmore jacet corpus Thomæ filii natu minoris Francisci filii Thomæ Berkeley de Ewdenesse in agro Sallopiensis Armigeri et Murielis uxoris ejus filiæ unius Gulielmi Child de Kinlett, Militis in eodem agro existentis du . . . . vivus spes indolis maxima depositus vero in spem . . . . Resurrectonis. Natus. 19: Septem: 1681. Obiit 18: April: 1682.

One son, Francis, a barrister at law, was Recorder of Shrewsbury from 1695 to 1710; and also recorder of Bridgnorth. He was the *Justice Ballance* of the sprightly comedy of the *Recruiting Officer*, said to have been written by George Farquhar, then resident at Shrewsbury in that capacity. His daughter, Laconia Berkeley, by Muriel, daughter of Sir William Childe and his wife Anne Lacon (whence her christian name) was *Silvia* of the same play. The scene was laid in Shrewsbury and was dedicated to "All Friends round the Wrekin." The Berkeleys are said to have taken great notice of the author, and hence the flattering manner in which they are introduced into the play. Some say that *Captain Plume*, another

character, was Mr. Browne of Caughley, her future husband. The Berkeleys of Ewdness were descended from Sir Maurice de Berkeley, who had large estates in Shropshire, and who was one of the most powerful of the baronial faction in Edward the Second's time; and at whose castle Edward was afterwards murdered. Later on, and during the latter half of last century, the hunter's horn, too, occasionally was heard here, when, in order that the hounds might start fresh to their work (packs were not so numerous as now), the Willey Squire was accustomed to come over to Ewdness and bring his horse overnight, to be ready by the time the roost-cock proclaimed the morn for a start over a wider expanse of country than modern fox-hunters often compass.

The piece of water in the hollow, now overgrown with weeds, was a fishpond, clear, and stocked with carp, and with a pleasure boat on it; at least it was so in Mr. Barnfield's time. This gentleman has in his possession an old oak chest which came from Ewdness, on the panels of which are the words "Faith, Hope, and Charity," and underneath six different coats of arms, said to have been those of former tenants, but he did not know what families they represented. These arms formerly stood over the fireplace in the dining room at Ewdness. One was the arms of Francis Berkeley, the inscription on whose monument has been given and who represented Salop with Sir Richard Newport, Knt., in 1620, and Shrewsbury Borough in 1623-4.

Ewdness afterwards became the property of Sir Joseph Astley, of Patshull, from whom it was purchased by the Whitmore family, and finally, on the sale of the Apley Estates, became the property of the present respected owner of Apley, Mr. W. O. Foster.

Mr. John Barnfield, previously referred to, was tenant here, and his father and grandfather, and so was his son. What a suitable name! Moreover, he married a Miss Farmer, one of the ancient Shropshire family whose name was formerly *Fermer*. He is descended from the Barnfields of Newport, one of whom was Richard Barnfield, whose poems, written 1594-8, were re-published six years ago, edited by Edward Arber, Esq., Hon. Fellow of King's College,

F.S.A., etc., and dedicated to Henry Morley, Esq., LL.D., Professor of English Literature. The Shropshire Barnfields have reason to be proud of their ancestor, "one of the most prominent of the minor literary luminaries of the age of Elizabeth," and whose name has been associated with that of Shakspeare, as in the "Passionate Pilgrim" for instance, written when he was 25 and Shakspeare 35, in 1599. Indeed, several poems attributed to Shakspeare, after much argument on both sides, have been proved to have been Barnfield's. It must be interesting to Shropshire people, and particularly to those dwelling near Wellington and the Wrekin, to find one of his most successful and original efforts dedicated "to his worshipfull good friend, Maister John Steventon, of Dothill, in the county of Salop, Esquire," thus—

> Sith conscience (long since) is exilde the citty,
> O let her in the countrey find some pitty,
> But if she be exilde the countrey too,
> O let her finde some favour yet with you.

The title of the piece is—"The Combat between Conscience and Covetousness in the Mind of Man."

Mr. Steventon lived at Dothill Park previously to Sir William Forester, and the poem was first printed in 1598. That the poet Barnfield was a Shropshire man and an ancestor of the present family of Barnfield there can be little doubt.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HALLON ALIAS HAWNE.

Legends and myths dismissed—Traditions borne out by facts—Union of old families, runaway marriages, litigation, etc.

HALLON is said to have been the seat of a famous Saxon chief who fought and fell on a field bordering on the Worfe, and "Allan's Ford" is pointed out as the spot where he crossed the river; it is added too that a castle was erected on the hill opposite to defend the passage. That the present turbulent stream was more formidable ere it settled down into its present channel, anyone may understand who has seen it during heavy rains, when it spreads beyond its bounds and forms a lake across the valley. But true as this might be with respect to the truant river, evidence is wanting in support of the legend as to the battle. History is silent on the subject; no relic can be shown as having been disinterred, such as one may expect would be forthcoming had a deadly feud been fought out at the ford, or on the fields beyond. The only approach to evidence, is a tradition among the inhabitants that *something* of a warlike character was found in times gone by. Lady Nisbett, an aunt of the present squire, owner of the Davenport estate, informed me that she remembered her father saying that in cutting a deep drain in the meadows called the "cow-pastures," a war-belt was found, with a badge upon it indicating that it had belonged to some chief of distinction, and that antiquaries assigned it to a Prince Allen or Hallon. But she does not remember whether her father was referring to it as having been then found or to some past time; neither does she know what became of it. It will not support the tradition to say that between this supposed battle-field and the "Walls," a curious ring of gold was ploughed up, which came into the hands of Mr. Hubert Smith, who gave it as a souvenir to Chevalier Frolich, when on a visit to St. Leonard's, Bridgnorth. No

archæologist would admit such evidence; and until better is forthcoming the story of the battle and the castle on the hill must be dismissed as myths.

But if no Prince Hallon fought, or had a castle here, to what does the place owe its name? Hallon, *alias* Hawne—is a hamlet in the original acceptation of the term. The word now is often indiscriminately applied to a small village or a cluster of houses, but a hamlet in former times comprised the residence of the proprietor, and the cottages of his dependants. Might not *Hawne* therefore be derived from the Saxon word *hamm* (for home) thus affording an instance of the survival of words in places where the population is not greater now than it was nearly a thousand years ago. It has its chief residence—stuccoed and coloured to conceal the stains of age and give uniformity to a building erected at different periods.

Opposite are outbuildings, barns, stables, and fold-yard. At a respectful distance are cottages, their roofs in part concealed by trees. In the centre of the hamlet stands the smithy, by a tree, with a cavity large enough to receive the refuse from the smithy fires. It is the only institution—if it might be honoured with the title—the hamlet boasts; and here hamleters and husbandmen meet to discuss local and probably Imperial matters, and to receive such crumbs of wisdom as the Solons of the anvil let fall as they lift their hammers high, and pause to emphasise their words. The smiths are father and son, the father being over 80 years of age. There is one feature of the hamlet which may not catch the eye, it is "Peter's Well" of which I have spoken on page 25. The water is good, clear, and refreshing. The woman who lent me a glass to drink from, assured me of its superior tea-making qualities, adding, "When away from home I never relish tea as I do when made from this water." This I find is the general testimony borne by the matrons of the hamlet. The spring issues from, or at any rate at, the foot of a perpendicular rock, and the little basin is protected by stones greened over by lichens. The surplus water runs into the Worfe, where a wood bridge crosses to the cow pastures mentioned above. With regard to the cave near the well, the Rev. S. B. James, M.A., is answerable for the following:—"An old woman named Sarah, grimed with soot

and sand, lived here, and was a regular churchgoer until she took offence. 'I wunna be *preached* at,' she said: 'the master read out loud in church 'Wash you—mak you clane.' I dunna like that—no more church for I."

One word as to the geographical and topographical position of the hamlet of Hallon. It stands on the brow of one of those billowy hills of sandstone which succeed each other here, and by their wavy outlines look like an inland sea. Through a deep cutting in the rock an elegant bridge of Chinese fashion crosses the descent to the village of Worfield. Hallon is a hamlet which belongs to the past, and excepting the sounds coming from the smithy, the lowing of cows, the bleating of sheep, or the laugh of milkmaids and cowboys, there is nothing to disturb the quiet and repose which the place inspires. It is surprising what a number of families in times past were in one way or other connected with Hallon, whose descendants no longer have any connection therewith. The Barkers, for instance, whose first appearance here is a matter of tradition. The name is supposed to have been assumed as a disguise by the first comer. This seems all the more probable as in 1368, one, Roger le Barker, is described as alias Claverhall. He purchased lands here which he vested in his wife, who settled portions on her two sons, Roger and William. The latter died 1411, and was succeeded by Henry Barker, who married the heiress of Hallon; Robert, his brother, shared the paternal inheritance, which his descendants held for nine generations, the last on record dying in the reign of James II. William Barker, son and heir of Henry, who possessed the bulk of the heritage, died 1480, leaving two sons, one of whom, John, the second son, married the heiress of Aston, and became the progenitor of the families of Barker there for ten generations—*the youngest son*, according to *the custom of the manor*, always inheriting. The elder brothers migrated to the north of the county, and founded families at Upton, Hopton Castle, Haughmond, and Shrewsbury. John Barker married the sister and co-heir of Rowland Hill, Knight, first Protestant Lord Mayor of London, in 1549. George remained in possession of the paternal estates at Hallon, and his only daughter and heiress married William Waverton, Esq., and their son, John Waverton, married one

of the Leightons, of Leighton, and left an only daughter and heiress, who married George Bromley, of Hallon, son of William Bromley, by Beatrice, daughter of Humphrey Hill, Esq., thus bringing about a union of the Barkers and Bromleys, two ancient Worfield and Hallon families. As the Barkers were enriched by marrying heiresses, so were the Bromleys by marriage with the Barkers, and the Davenports again by marrying with the Bromleys. Again we are in the region of tradition, but tradition fortified by facts. The story is that young William Davenport, heir presumptive of the Chorley estates in Cheshire, became benighted in Morfe Forest, then full of dangerous pitfalls, bogs, etc. Wandering in vain trying to find a road, the traveller saw lights from Hallon House—since pulled down, but the foundations of which are visible beneath the turf in the park, a short distance from the present mansion. It stood on the brow of the hill, overlooking the valley of the Worfe—a position favourable for its beacon lights to flash across the valley. Following in their direction, the benighted traveller soon found himself cheered by the woodfires blazing on the hearth, and received that hearty welcome the Bromleys were ever ready to accord to strangers. He found himself hospitably entertained by his host, but the smiling curiosity of the daughter made a still deeper impression, and he resolved to win her for his own. How many subsequent visits the adventurer paid to Hallon after his first introduction is not known, but the exact spot in the park where he declared his passion is pointed out by gossips, to whom it was made known by the ancients of the hamlet, on whose minds after events caused it to be impressed. The father of the young lady, Francis Bromley, soon after died, and his widow married Sir Walter Wrottesley, of Wrottesley Park, her near neighbour, and she removed there, together with her daughter. The young lady was carefully guarded; but the Wrottesley Woods witnessed stolen interviews between the lovers, and means were found and agreed upon for flight. Running away with an heiress under age in those days was a serious offence in the eye of the law, and under some circumstances amounted to a capital crime. The ire of the guardians of Miss Jane was aroused to its highest pitch: the legality of the marriage was questioned, the right to the property challenged, and

family lawyers and learned counsels were engaged in drawing up briefs, in putting in and answering questions, and in litigation of one kind or another for nearly a lifetime from the time of the marriage. It would take up too much space to give fuller particulars. Suffice it to say that in addition to the name of William, that of Henry Davenport figures frequently in these proceedings; and to prevent confusion it should be remembered that there were three Henry Davenports in succession from William who married Miss Bromley, the heiress of Hallon. These were—Henry, son of William, who married Miss Maddock; Henry, grandson of William, who married Elizabeth, daughter of Sherrington Talbot, of Laycock, Wilts; and Henry, great grandson of William, who married (1) Mary Lucy Chardin, and (2) Barbara, daughter of Sir John Ivory Talbot, an Irish baronet. The son of the latter, Sherrington Davenport, married Miss Gratiana Rodd, (daughter of Mr. B. Rodd, Herefordshire), a lady very celebrated for her beauty in her day. It is said that when the Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV., was watching each pretty woman enter the Assembly Rooms at Bath, on Miss Rodd coming in, the Master of the Ceremonies, Beau Nash, remarked, "Here, your Royal Highness, comes a *Rodd* to beat them all." There is a memorial slab in Worfield Church with the following eulogy, attributed to the poet Shenstone, a friend of her husband:—

> "Reader, though young and fair, by all caressed,
> With taste and sense or every virtue blessed;
> Be thou the valued friend, the much-loved wife.
> Whate'er adorns or flatters human life,
> Oh, be not vain, for all that mortals prize
> Beneath this tomb in mouldering ruin lies."

Her youngest son, the Rev. Edward Davenport, married, in 1770, Catherine ("Pretty Kitty Taylor"). Henry's daughter, by his first wife Mary, married John Mytton. The story goes that she eloped with him from a ball, going off in such a hurry that she did not stay to pick up her satin shoe which came off in a puddle on her way through Alscote, where it was picked up next morning. She is described as beautiful, like her mother, as a model matron, and a good christian. The recorder of her death in the parish register embellishes the entry with these eulogistic remarks:—"Mrs. Mytton,

of Halston, resigned up her last breath there very patiently and piously, Feb. ye 15th, 1740, about 5 of ye clock in ye morning. A wife, in my humble opinion, exactly answered by ye description given in ye Book of Proverbs, chap. xxxi. verse 18 to the end." By Henry's second wife, Barbara, second daughter of Sir John Ivory Talbot, he left a son William, D.D., Rector of Breden, Gloucestershire; and Sherrington Davenport, Esq., who, it has been shown, married Miss Rodd, was succeeded by his seventh and last surviving son, William Yelverton Davenport, who in the neighbourhood is still spoken of as the "Old Squire," and as a genial and jolly specimen of the type of the "Old English Gentleman." He appears, from all accounts, to have been much esteemed, especially for his kindness to the poor. He was a great sportsman, and possessed one of the finest kennels of greyhounds in the kingdom, consisting of from ten to fifteen brace of the choicest breed; coursing being in his day the form of amusement most in vogue among the country gentry, a pursuit in which he was eminently successful in winning prize cups, stakes, and other rewards at the various coursing meets he was accustomed to attend. He married one of the Bligh's of Bath, but had no children. As a widower he led a most unselfish life, putting down every unnecessary expense that he might provide for the family of his nephew and successor.

This was the Rev. Edmund Sherrington Davenport, who was vicar of Worfield for 30 years. He married the heiress, Miss Tongue, already mentioned, by whom he had five sons and five daughters, amongst whom were William Sherrington Davenport, heir to Davenport, and Lucy Susanna, who in 1854 married Sir Alexander Nisbet, R.N., and had issue Alexander Cockburn Nisbet, and Lucy Jane, who died 1867. William Sherrington Davenport married Louisa Marindin, of Chesterton, and had five children, including Edmund Henry, the present squire, who married Miss Smith, of Tasmania.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE HERMITAGE AND ST. JAMES'S PRIORY.

Dwelling place of a Saxon Prince—Henry III's grant to St. James's Priory, now a very pleasant residence.

IN my "Old Sports and Sportsmen" p.p. 26-7, the reader will find the following account of this well-known Hermitage.

"The Hermitage, with its caves hewn out of the solid sand rock, by the road which led through the forest in the direction of Worfield, meets us with the tradition that here the brother of King Athelstan came seeking retirement from the world, and ended his days within sight of the queenly Severn. Besides tradition, however, evidence exists to shew that this eremetical cave of Saxon origin, under the patronage of the Crown, was occupied by successive hermits, each being ushered to his cell with royal seal and patent, in the same way as a dean, constable, or sheriff was introduced to his office; as in the case of John Oxindon (Edward III., 1328), Andrew Corbrigg (Edward III., 1333), Edmund de la Mare (Edward III., 1335), and Roger Boughton (Edward III., 1346). From the frequency of the presentations, it would appear either that these hermits must have been near the termination of their pilgrimage when they were inducted, or that confinement to a damp cell did not agree with them: indeed, no one looking at the place itself would consider it was a desirable one to live in."

For a description of St. James's Priory, at the extreme verge of Worfield parish, and near to Hermitage Hill, I will quote the following account given of it in my "Severn Valley" p.p 382-3.

ST. JAMES'S PRIORY.

"On leaving Bridgnorth we pass the little bylet, willowed to the water's edge, below the bridge, and immediately sight St. James's, a mansion which has an open aspect, and is effectively thrown

into relief by a background of trees. From its present appearance few would imagine that the original purpose for which it was designed was an hospital. It had a Priory attached, and like other institutions of its kind had many privileges and benefactors. Among the latter was Henry III., who when at Bridgnorth granted to the Brethren the privilege of having a horse daily plying in the Forest of Morfe, to collect dry stumps and dead wood for their fires. By the first foundation it was ordained that if any inhabitant of the town happen by the visitation of God to be infected with leprosy, or any such like sickness, that they were to have hospitality, and a priest to say mass and pray for the founders. It was also at one time appropriated for the use of maimed soldiers. An interesting seal of the house is in the possession of Mr. Whitmore, of Glen Hall, Leicestershire. The walls are massive ; and the older part is spanned by large beams of oak. The front originally consisted of two wings, with an entrance to a court-yard behind, but the intervening space, some hundred years ago, was built up, giving to the exterior view the present façade, with a splendid drawing-room, about seventeen feet high. The Priory House is large, with a cupola and dove-cote ; the church of the Priory was built by William de Kenegate, and others of pious memory. The interior cote-roof retains its massive oak beams, and in that part used as a stable a rude pillar with its capital may still be seen. Several skeletons have from time to time been dug up in what was once the burial ground. Nearer the drive gate, in former times, stood the "Domus Leprosorum sancti Jacobi." The dark Scotch firs upon the lawn, the extensive old fashioned gardens, quiet avenues, the romantic "wilderness," the shady "grove," and foliaged "long walk," make it a retreat from the disturbing influences of the world, where we might take "Le Lepreux" by X de Maistre, and imagine the scenes described had once existence within the silence of the domain. The grounds and plantations adjoining, as well as the neighbouring woods, the "Wilderness" and "Long Walk," add a charm to the place which render it a most desirable residence. It is the property of Hubert Smith Esq., who inherited it from his father, and is the residence of Major Colley.

CHAPTER XX.

HILTON, HOCCOM, THE HOPES, WINSCOT, etc.

HILTON contains the ancestral home of the Smythes, now represented by Captain George Smythe, of Hilton House. The family appear to have been settled here as far back as 1327. The following is from Burke's "Landed Gentry": "Thomas Smythe, Esq., of Hilton, Co. Salop, Major Madras Engineers, born 12 September, 1808, married Mary, only child of Capt. Deans, R.N.

Lineage.—There is every reason to believe that the family of Smythe became settled at Hilton at the time of the Conquest, but as the Court Rolls extend only as far back as 1327, temp. Edward II, there is no documentary proof of the fact beyond a charter granted by Edward I, afterwards confirmed by Elizabeth, from which it appears that the family were regularly descended from ancestry of the paternal line and name from the first named period. Several branches emanated from the present stock, and held considerable possessions in the neighbourhood, among which were the Smiths of Dallicote.

The grandfather of the present representative, Thomas Smythe, of Hilton, Captain Shropshire Militia, married Elizabeth, daughter of Wannerton Groome, Esq., of Trysull, Co. Stafford, and Mary his wife. Their son John Groome Smythe, of Hilton, D.L. Major Local Militia, born 18 July, 1771, married 23 September, 1805, Anne, youngest daughter of Thomas Park, Esq., of Highfield House, Lancaster, and sister of Lord Wensleydale, and by her he had issue, Thomas; John Groom, H.E.J.C., died 25 July, 1839; George, Commander R.N.; Henry Ralph, Rector of Beckbury, Co. Salop; Anne, married General Henry Monckton, fourth son of the late Hon. Edward Monckton, of Somerford.*

* All these are now dead but Captain George Smythe, who at present resides at Hilton. The former Member of Parliament for North Staffordshire, (Francis Monckton,) is a son of Anne Smythe.

HOCCOM lies on the south-west side of the parish, between Roughton and Bentley. There is not much to say of Hoccom, except that a family of that name lived here in the reign of Henry VI., and that the estate remained with the same family until the middle of the last century. The tradition is that the family received the estate from William the Conqueror in return for services rendered by the head as an officer in his army. The late Mr. Locke King, M.P. kept up the name, the eldest of his sons bearing the name of his remote ancestor, William Hoccom.

THE HOPES consist of two half-timbered black and white cottages on the right of the road leading from Wellington to Bridgnorth, near the bottom of Newton bank, west of the village of Worfield. They lie picturesquely in a hollow, between sand-banks, cart loads of which during heavy rains get washed into the public road. The cottages have been made out of what was formerly a farmhouse, one of the numerous small holdings once so numerous in this parish. But what the name is derived from is not known, unless it was that —being in danger of having his seeds washed down from the high grounds when there were heavy rains, and his crops scorched up on a sandy soil when there was drought—the tenant lived in constant hope of better seasons.

WINSCOT lies a short distance above, and Winscot Hills a little beyond; but the farm has been thrown into that of Newton, held by Mr. Sing, under W. O. Foster, Esq.

Close to the road on the opposite side, is "Whitning House," a name derived, as the old man living there, and now 82 years of age, tells me, from its having been a place for whitening, or bleaching home-spun flax and hempen cloths, when weaving was carried on in cottages now down. There were then, so tradition alleges, huts or cotes about, from which men watched the sheets by night.

× Hope means a small valley, a recess, or hollow. The Hopes, Sansaw: Hope Bowdler: Wilderhope: Hopton &c

CHAPTER XXI.

KINGSLOW and STANLOW TOWNSHIPS.

KINGSLOW is a name the origin of which is, I suppose, to be arrived at inferentially, as geologists judge of the former heights of our present hilly elevations, not from their present altitude but from the inclination of the rocks on their sides. Etymology too throws some light on the subject, for in Saxon language the terminating syllable uniformly, I believe, signifies a burying place. These *lows* too are usually found on high ground; and it may be mentioned that a former occupant in digging out a foundation to effect some improvement here, a few years ago, discovered a grave two feet deep, which contained a number of human bones. The position of Kingslow is so admirably described in a M.S. work by the late eminent and painstaking antiquary, William Hardwicke, Esq. lent me by Mr. E. D. Farmer, of Bridgnorth, that I make no apology for introducing it here. He says: "The township of Kingslow, though seated on a beautiful, commanding, and picturesque eminence, declines to the west, south, and east from Stanlow, its land overlooking the extensive and intermediate country of the Clee Hills, across the dale of Corve to the Stretton Hills and the Wrekin, and over a flat part of this country towards the north, from thence to the high grounds of Weston, the seat of the Right Hon. the Earl of Bradford, and the interesting and finely-wooded demesnes of Patshull, so delightfully intersected with water, and Upper Pepperhill, the old seat of the Earls of Shrewsbury; also Patshull Park, Pattingham, Rudge, the Trife, or Apers Castle Hill, the latter in early times having been the temporary abode of marauding Danes; and from whence the eye is carried to the Enville sheep walk. The view connects this grand equestrian promenade to the great forest of Wyre; the pleasure grounds of Kinlet, once the mansion of the Blounts, after them of the Lacons, and now of the Childs. These

prominent landmarks bound the horizon which surrounds this enchanting and delightful abode. This township hath the Pasford brook as its limit against the parish of Pattingham and the lordship of Rudge on the east, and partly on the south; the township of Chesterton approaches it in the same aspect, and again with Ackleton on the West. From the acceptation of its name I conceive it must have been the sepulchre of some king of very early times, as all Lows are understood to be derived from the Saxon appellation, and always to have had their existence on eminences, of various extent and descriptions, and are considered to be places of interment of our early Saxon or Pagan ancestors."

I learn also from the same source that Kingslow House and estate were held in former times by a family who took their name from the place, and by their neighbours, the Gyldons; afterwards by the Baches and the Deveys, the latter of whom we read of in the reigns of Edward III. and Richard II. as holding Copley. A John Devey, of Copley, died in the reign of Henry VI. Another John had an estate there 4th of Edward IV., and another 9th of Edward IV. They married with the Kingslows in the reign of Edward III. Edith Kingslow died of the plague 23rd of Edward III., as did William, their son, in the same year. John Kingslow, 4th of Edward IV., surrendered an estate at Kingslow to his half-brother, Humphrey Granger, and a hermitage having been founded within the monastery of Shene (afterwards Richmond Palace), a John Kingslow is said to have been the first hermit. The Deveys intermarried with the Whites, the Walkers, of Roughton, and the Smythes, of Hilton, and we find them at Catstree and Pattingham, as well as at Kingslow. They were also connected with the Gyldons, and through them with the Hoards, of Hoard's Park, with the Curetons, of Bromley, and the ancient family of New, of Chesterton. The Deveys continued to hold their paternal estate at Kingslow till 1881, when it was sold by the representatives of the family, Mr. Edward Devey Farmer, and his brothers, grandsons of the late Thomas Devy, Esq., of Bridgnorth and Kingslow, Solicitor, an obituary of whom is given in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1822, page 473. He had three sons who died unmarried, the eldest of whom, Thomas, was Clerk of

Appeals for the Colonies in the Privy Council office, and one daughter who married William Farmer, of Ancastor, Canada West, and whose family were seated at Brockton Court, parish of Sutton Maddock, for several centuries. Near to the present farmhouse are the ruins of former buildings. In a cart shed I noticed a carved oak beam, which had evidently done duty in a superior situation at some time or other. In other and original positions were angles and corners, mullioned windows, some bricked up, and other disused portions of earlier stone structures which have given way to the modern house, now in the occupation of Mr. Bowen, who rents the farm.

Near here was the old mansion of the Astleys, who owned Ewdness at one time. Sir Jacob Astley removed to Patshull, an estate afterwards sold to George Lord Pigot, but prior to doing so he purchased from Thomas Devey considerable property he had from the Hardwickes, in the parish of Pattingham. Very much more might be said of the Kingslow and Stanlow families, and of the transactions in connection with the Manorial Courts, in which their names occur, relating to the exchange and transfer of lands and premises. I may mention that, among other charities given to the parish of Worfield, is one from Mrs. Elizabeth Devey, of Kingslow, of £10, a record of which was originally placed on the south wall of the vestry. Records of the Stanlows go back to the 1st of Edward III., when a William de Stanlow, chaplain, is mentioned as surrendering a nook of land in Stanlow. The name occurs also in the 5th, 16th, 23rd, 24th, 30th, 40th, of the same reign, when Mary de Stanlowe is stated to have given "the lord a fine for a license to marry herself;" and Thomas, the son of Robert Luce, of Alvescote, paid a fine to marry Agnes de Stanlow. In the 42nd of Edward III, and 43rd of the same reign, also in the reigns of Henry IV, V, and VI; at which latter date, Alice, the wife of Stephen Stanlow, is said to have been a widow of the lord, was presented for having married herself with the license of the lady (Julia, Countess of Huntyngdon) and contrary to the custom of the manor. In the reigns of Edward IV., Henry VII. and VIII., and later reigns, till that of Elizabeth, the name occurs, when that of Billingsley commences, and is continued to the year 1715, when John Billingsley surrendered his possessions to Thomas Devey, of Kingslow.

CHAPTER XXIV.

NEWTON AND OLDINGTON.

THERE is not very much to say of Newton as a township. The house, the residence of Mr. Sing who occupies the farm, is seen a field or so away from the Bridgnorth road at the top of Newton Bank. Tradition says there was a chapel here, as at Chesterton and at Roughton. Old inhabitants say that a portion of the building has been converted into a cottage, and the cemetery into a garden, where human bones have occasionally been dug up. There is in the constable's accounts of Worfield, under date 1603, an item for making a grave here; but this is scarcely likely to establish the fact. The old family of Newton who formerly lived here, at Echoes Hill farm, nearer to Stockton, on the opposite side of the Bridgnorth road, and at Severn Hall, are all gone. They were an unfortunate family. One shot himself; and another in a drunken fit murdered his wife, and although the matter was attempted to be "hushed up," he was tried, found guilty, and hung at Shrewsbury.

OLDINGTON is between Newton and Ewdness, and is 2 miles distant from Worfield. Oldington was held by a similar service in early times to that of Ewdness, that of conveying writs of the deputy sheriff of the manor "anywither within the county." The Oldingtons held other offices; thus in 1256 William de Oldinton and Lawrence de Oldinton (Oldington) are mentioned as sitting on a jury. Thomas de Oldinton, Nicholas de Ewdinas, and others are mentioned in October, 1283, as making a valuation of the manor of Worfield. Stephen de Oldington is mentioned also; and November 19th, 1291, Richard de Oldington is mentioned as a juror in an inquest held at Brug (Bridgnorth). Thomas and Stephen de Oldington are mentioned as serving on a local jury, June 15th, 1303.

The Haslewoods became possessed of Ewdness, by a member of the family marrying the heiress of that property. The Haslewood

family seem to have held a property at Oldington with uninterrupted succession from Thomas Haslewood, who married in the reign of Henry IV, daughter and heiress of Richard de Eudenas, son of Robert de Eudenas, younger son of Richard, Lord of Eudenas, down to Thomas Haslewood, who died at Oldington in 1659, whose son Roger came to reside in Bridgnorth, and Francis, the elder brother, having inherited the property, his son Thomas sold it to Thomas Talbot, of Bridgnorth. Afterwards it was bought by the Whitmores, who sold it, together with Ewdness and other property, to the present owner, W. O. Foster, Esq.

The name of Haslewood occurs in old Worfield records in connection with offices in connection with the church: Roger and Richard are mentioned as wardens of Worfield Church and chantry in 1501. The name occurs in connection with the same office in 1507-8, 9, 10, 11, and many subsequent years. The old house has been recently transformed into one more suited to the requirements of the times. In fact, the three storeys have been converted into two. The large, roomy kitchen has been made the entrance hall, but the old heavy beams and rafters of black oak, moulded, and other portions remain.

It is thought by some that it was here that the chapel was built, for the use of Newton on one side, and Ewdness on the other, as well as for Oldington. After the chapel had fallen into decay, Mr. Berkley and his wife had leave from Mr. Hoard, of Kingslow, to sit in the pew which he (Mr. Hoard) had been occupying in Worfield Church, and in the chancel of which church, a son of Mr. Berkley lies, as previously stated.

Mr. William Broughall, of Oldington, comes of an old family of well-known agriculturists, and is in possession of a remarkably fine old family jug, with groups of agricultural subjects painted on the sides. On the right side is the flail, the scythe, and a beehive, emblems of Industry; also a wheelbarrow and a hammer; whilst below is the harrow, the plough, and a measure; to the left, a sickle, a pair of tongs, a riddle, a sack of grain marked T.W., a wooden shovel and a hatchet. On the opposite side is another group, consisting of a

sheaf of wheat, a sickle, a plough, a scythe, pikel, hay knife, riddle, a beer bottle, a mattock, broomhook, dung-hook, mittens, churn, etc. etc. In the centre are these mottoes: "Trust in God." "The Husbandman's diligence provides bread." Beneath the name, "John Broughall," is the following motto on a scroll: "In God is all our trust"; and underneath these lines:

"Let the wealthy and great
Roll in splendour and state,
I envy them not, I declare it,
I eat my own lamb,
My own chicken and ham,
I shear my own fleece and I wear it.
I have lawns, I have bowers,
I have fruit, I have flowers,
The lark is my morning alarm,
So jolly boys now,
Here's 'God speed the plough,'
'Long life and success to the farmer.'"

Underneath, again, is the following: "Industry produceth wealth."

CHAPTER XXIII.

ROUGHTON.

Roughton House,—Norman hunting lodge,—The Bell, Stokes, and Berkeley families, Grammar School. etc,

ROUGHTON is an interesting member of the sister townships clustering around Worfield village. It is associated with several old Worfield names, as those of the Bell, the Walker, and the Stokes family. As direct representative of the Bells, the name of the well-known physician, Doctor Bell Fletcher, of Birmingham, may be mentioned. William Bell became seated at Roughton in 1642 having purchased estates here, and his only daughter and heiress married William Stokes, upon whose death his five sisters became co-heiresses, and disposed of the family estates to their first cousin, William Smith Stokes, who married their brother's widow, and who, about the year 1794, erected the present brick mansion upon a new site, which has been occupied by the family ever since. He was the second surviving son and heir of Francis Stokes, of Red Hill, Oldswinford, by Katherine his wife, daughter of William Calcott, of Berwick Malvesin, Atcham, by Dorothy, daughter of Rowland Green Berkeley, descended from Berkeleys Barons Berkeley. Through this marriage, the family is also descended in the sixteenth degree from Agnes Long, wife of William Champneys, sister and heiress of William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester, the founder of New College, Oxford, and the College of Winchester. William Smith Stokes had, by Nancy his wife, three sons, who lived to years of maturity, and three daughters who married: viz. James Marshall Stokes, the eldest, who was a Lieutenant in the Army, and lost his life in the entrenchments at Badajos in Spain, on the 6th of April, 1812, aged 23, unmarried. William Smith Stokes, who was a Lieutenant in the Navy, and on board the "Tonnant," commanded by Captain Charles Tyler at the memorable battle of "Trafalgar,"

and died on the 9th December, 1826, aged 36, unmarried. Lastly Michael Smith Stokes, who left a family of sons and daughters, and whose widow now resides at Roughton. He inherited his father's estates, as well as those of his grandfather, Francis Stokes, formerly the possessions of their maternal ancestor, Francis Smith, of Warwick, Esq , the far-famed architect of his day, from whose plans the Church of St. Philip, Birmingham, the great mansions of Ombersley Court, Kinlet, Patshull, and Davenport House arose into existence. There is one interesting circumstance worth mentioning in connection with the Stokes family, and that is that they are in possession of the land which was allotted by the early Norman kings to the foresters of Morfe Forest, and all that remains of the old hunting lodge. It is true, there is not much left of the latter but stout strong walls and cellaring. It had large cheerless rooms Miss Stokes tells me, a fire-place spacious enough and a spit strong enough, to roast an ox ; the latter being turned by chains, and some sort of machinery, and no doubt something more savoury than roast beef—however welcome that would have been after a hard days sport—has been cooked and eaten there. At the wish of the tenants, she said, the building having been converted into cottages, the old fireplace had been bricked up, since she remembered it, and some of the building taken down. But there the remains of the old lodge are, and it is impossible not to regard them with interest. There the huntsmen of higher game than now leads the red-coats of the Albrighton pack across the country—and in part over the same ground—tempted lords and ladies with dogs and hawks, with a large retinue, to follow heron and bustard, and boar and antlered deer, in the open, and in the wild intricacies of the forest. In that old lodge, when boar-spears and staves had been laid aside, when horns and bows had been hung up, and weary men sought shelter for the night, what feastings there must have been ! what noisy revelry ! mingling with the screams of hawks from their perches overhead, and the hoarse baying of hounds in their kennels outside !

The little Norman Chapel, too, at Roughton, whose tinkling bell once sounded over marsh and forest land and waste, and served to call steward and freeman, boor and hind to worship, where all

were taught to forget distinction, and where the Vicar of Worfield is recorded to have officiated so late as 1534, is gone, and not a wreck is left behind. It was dedicated to St. Ann, and stood on "The Green," I am told, but there is nothing now to mark the spot where it once stood.

I may mention here that the Stokes family bought the forest land and lodge alluded to from the Earl of Shrewsbury, whose renowned ancestors had charge of the forest, and were at one time King's foresters. But the first foresters appear to have been Normans. Henry, youngest son of the Conqueror, with the predilections of his father, and the same love of the chase, appointed one Gorbod, whose name seems to betray his nationality, as his hereditary forester for that portion of Morfe bordering on the Manor of Worfield. Henry II., soon after ascending the throne, confirmed the appointment. His name appears in the forest rolls in 1155, when William Fitz Allan was Sheriff, and William Fitz Ulgar was chief forester of Shropshire. But the Norman name of Gorbod soon became converted into the English one of Gilbert, by which name he was known in 1272, when serving on a Worfield jury.

THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL at Roughton has been mentioned already, page 41. It is a handsome and commodious building on the side of the road, near to Roughton House, and occupies a healthy and very pleasant situation.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ROUGHTON (Continued.)

Roughton Hall, an ancient house and antique furniture to match,—The Creswell and Wolryche families, Roughton Farm, etc.

ROUGHTON HALL was formerly the property of the Stokes family. It now belongs to John Pritchard, Esq., and is the residence of Sackville Creswell, Esq. It is situate at a bend in the valley of the Worfe, and commands good views of the course of the river, which is marked by pollards, whilst beyond are the Davenport, Burcote and other woods, making up a picture of pleasant sylvan scenery. It is villa-like in appearance, and has a bright and cheerful look about it, its owners having done their best to hide its age. A closer scrutiny discloses its antiquity, and shows that it has grown through centuries to be what it is; more particularly—where lath and plaster, and whitewash, and paint have not yet come—as in the attics, where the skeleton woodwork is seen to advantage. The cellarage is very curiously constructed; it is unusually extensive and is older than other portions of the building, the probability being that it has done duty for a much larger house in its time. It has intricate recesses, strange nooks and corners, is strongly built and vaulted, and has old oak doors, with heavy hinges and strong iron fastenings. Sir Baldwyn Leighton, when visiting here for a few days, some time ago, was much struck with it, I am told, and particularly with the way the arches are turned over one of the stone mullioned windows, fitted with iron bars. Sir Baldwyn considered it the oldest portion of the house, and it bears that appearance. The walls are from three to four feet thick, firmly built, and so perfectly cemented that there is not the least moisture. There is a curious but shallow square pit in the floor, which it is difficult to account for. It is bricked round, is perfectly dry, and is said to have been designed as a place in which to hide the family plate in

troubled times ; but the idea it suggested to my mind was that it might have been intended to receive the drippings of beer barrels when brewings on a larger scale than at present were common.

Not but what there might have been hiding places, for on going over the house, and witnessing the thickness of the walls, the many recesses, etc., it is not difficult to imagine that some of the latter may have formed secret hiding places in troubled times. Mr. Creswell, with rare taste, seems to have chosen much of his furniture to suit the character of the house ; at any rate, so far as chimney-pieces, cabinets, sideboards, and other things of that kind are concerned. An old oak cabinet in the entrance hall bears the date 1645. It was purchased at the sale of the late Thomas Summers, of Oldbury, a well-known connoisseur in such matters. A sideboard in the dining-room is most of it of the same period. It has two caryatic figures, supposed to caricature Charles the Second, in the latter and more licentious period of his life. The whole may not all be of the same age, as the carved shield for instance, in the centre, which has on it the Creswell family arms– 1st, the three squirrels of the Creswells ; 2nd, the raven of the Corbet's (of Moreton Corbet); 3rd, the stars of Estcrick, with symbols of the Sackvilles, Creswells, etc., and the motto on a scroll beneath, "*Aut nunquam tentes aut perfice.*" There is a massive chimney-piece in the same room, also elaborately carved, and rich in devices and ornament of various kinds, after the whims or fancy of our ancestors. Altogether Mr. Creswell has a fine collection of these in various parts of the house, including chairs, tables, wardrobes, chests, etc.

ROUGHTON FARM is occupied by Mrs. Wolryche, whose late husband was believed to be descended from the ancient family of that name, resident at Dudmaston and Worfield, although he was accustomed to spell his name Woolryche. Andrew Wolryche, the son of William, represented the borough of Bridgnorth in Parliament in 1435 ; and Humphrey Wolryche, gent , his grandson, who appears in the lists of lords, knights, esquires, gentlemen "resydent" in the county of Salop, in the 17th of Henry VII., was father of the John who married Mary, "The Fair Maid of Gatacre," only daughter of

Robert Gatacre, of that famous old Saxon mansion whose glazed walls are matters of tradition. Thomas, third in descent from John, who was born at Worfield, 1598, received his education at Cambridge, and was admitted to the Inner Temple, as was the custom with gentlemen of that age. On his return to his native county he represented the Borough of Wenlock in Parliament in the years 1620—23, and 25. At the breaking out of the Civil Wars he became captain of militia and one of the deputy-lieutenants of the county. He was appointed by Charles I. Governor of Bridgnorth, in whose cause he became a severe sufferer, being, as his epitaph tells us, "twice sequestered from his estates, and more than once cast into prison." His name occurs in the catalogue of lords, knights, and gentlemen who compounded for their estates as having the sum of £730 14s. imposed on him as a fine. The epitaph speaks of "the lofty majesty of his person," and assures us "that, to his pre-eminent skill in heraldry, he added the more solid uses of history and mathematics." "At length," says the author of this florid composition, "our Ulric," such was the original name, "was summoned to the assembly of the saints on the Feast of St. Ulic (Udalricus episcopus), July 4, 1668, having been honoured with the successive titles of knight and baronet." Sir John Wolryche, Bart., the only son, who is described as of Dudmaston, in the parish of Quatt, was High Sheriff of Shropshire in 1716. He was of a daring and venturesome disposition, and his name has been handed down in connection with a traditionary equestrian feat he performed at Bridgnorth, by leaping his horse over the rocks in the Cartway. The cave-houses in the rocks on each side were then inhabited, and the tradition is that he spurred his horse into a gallop and made him jump from side to side. He was, in fact, too venturesome, for it was by a reckless act he lost his life, when in the flower of his manhood. Being a great sportsman he seems to have indulged in the diversion in season and out of season, for on returning from hunting on the 25th of June, 1723, he attempted to cross the Severn with his horse, and was drowned opposite to Dudmaston when 32 years of age. He was never married, and the baronetage expired with him. The arms of the family of Wolrich, as Sir John spelt his name,

alias Wolryche, *vulgo* Woolrich, as the late Mr. Woolrich, of Roughton, was wont to spell his name, are shown on a brass plate in Quatt Church, erected to the memory of Thomas Wolryche, Esq., who died 1510; and those of a later Thomas, of Dudmaston (1623), also on a monument in Quatt Church, with 20 quarterings. Few families can show so many, or boast so many centuries of well-established and patented gentility. After Sir John's death, the estate was enjoyed by his surviving sister Mary, who was succeeded by her uncle Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Weld, at whose demise, in 1774, the property passed to William Whitmore, Esq., great grandson of Richard Whitmore, Esq., of Lower Slaughter, by Anne daughter of Sir John Weld, of Willey. The present Mrs. Wolryche of Roughton was a Smitheman, a family of considerable importance in the county formerly. John Smitheman was of Little Wenlock: John Unett Smitheman was father of John who was Sheriff of Shropshire in 1761. His wife was sister and co-heir of Basil Brooke of Madeley. John the Sheriff, resided at West Coppice. Mr. Rowland Smitheman of the Crown Pipe Works, Broseley, and the Rev. Mr. Smitheman, of the same place, are also of the same family. Sir H. Hope Edwardes, Bart., Wootton Hall, Ashbourne, is descended maternally from the same. There was a Rowland Smytheman of Worfield more than 200 years ago.

CHAPTER XXV.

RINDLEFORD AND ROWLEY.

Fulling and flour mills.—The Rowleys of Rowley and Shrewsbury.—The Rowley Mansion and Schools.—A very old house, etc.

RINDLEFORD and Rowley were once famous for their Mills. That of Rowley has long since disappeared; but the one at Rindleford still continues, and its covered waggons may constantly be seen along the lanes and highways for half a score of miles around. It appears originally to have been a fulling mill; John Walker, of Rindleford in the time of Richard II. is said to have purchased the fulling mill there, called the Walk Mill; and lands there and at Alscote. He died in 1416; and fifth in descent from him was the Rev. John Walker, Chaplain Vicar of Worfield. The property continued in the same family until Roger Walker sold it to George and William Colley. It is now the property of W. O. Foster, Esq., and rented and worked by Mr. E. Powell.

ROWLEY.—Burke says the name of Rowley is made up of two Saxon words, *Row*, meaning sweet, and *leigh*, a field. An old family of this name lived here in early times; and from them sprang the Shrewsbury family, one of whom, William, made a large fortune, and built in 1613 the well-known "Rowley Mansion," the first brick building, said to have been erected in the town: he also founded the Rowley or Blue-coat Schools. He was admitted a burgess in 1594; afterwards he became an alderman. He favoured the Puritans of that day, and was the friend of Richard Baxter. William Rowley's son Roger, was brought up to the law, and is said to have been the first person in the town who kept a carriage. The arms are interesting as showing the connection of the Worfield and Shrewsbury families. They appear to have been *arg.* on a bend *sa.* between two Cornish choughs pp., three scallop shells of 1st. The arms of the Shrewsbury Rowleys having been the same.

The Blue School was founded in 1724, by Thomas

If we go further back we find the name spelt Rowlowe. In the decisive battle of Evesham, which put an end to the rebellion of the barons, Roger de Rowlowe is said to have been slain, May 4, 1265. Another of the family whose name is so spelt, fought at Agincourt under King Henry V. and his faithful squire, David Gam, October 26, 1415. It was somewhere between these dates, probably, that William de Rowlowe came and settled in Worfield, for in the fourth year of the young King Edward III. (1331), William Rowley is said to have died possessed of a messuage, three nooks of land (about 45 or 50 acres), and a water mill at Rowley. They seem to have had enough of war—to have hung up their iron caps, halberds and habergeons, and to have very successfully devoted themselves to the cultivation of their uplands and the grinding of their own and neighbours' grain. As they grew and multiplied they spread to other townships in the parish—to Catstree, Wyken, Stableford, Hallon, Newton, and Alscote, where we read of them being engaged in similar peaceful pursuits.

Among family connections they formed, one was famous for longevity, another for bravery and loyalty. Benjamin Rowley, of Alscote, married Margaret Parr, third daughter of Thomas Parr, of Winscote Hill, near Alscote, a son of George, and nephew of the "old, old, very old man," Thomas Parr, of Wolaston (born 1483, died 1635). I find in the churchwardens' accounts Roger Rowlowe warden in 1502; and William, whose name is spelt as now, Rowley, filled that office in 1620, again in 1634, and 1636. In an old M.S. book which Miss Eykyn kindly showed me, with an account of a meeting of churchwardens held in 1637, for allotting seats, I found the names, Francis, George, William, Edward, and Roger Rowley, associated with the old name of Eykyn. A few years subsequent to this, in 1647, Roger Rowley, of Rowley, is mentioned in an original paper, hanging up, when I saw it, in Apley Hall, as the gentleman to whom the sequestrators appointed by Parliament sold and disposed of the personal estate of Sir William Whitmore, Knight, for the sum of £583 3s. 2d. Anne Rowley, eleventh in descent from William, previously mentioned, married in 1656 a Mr. Shallcrosse, of Derby, whose son John, in 1684, sold the Rowley Estate, which it is said

had been in the family for 500 years, to the Rev. John Harwood, LL.D., of Shrewsbury, who in 1709 sold it to Richard Hill, of Hawkstone, from whom it was purchased by Henry Davenport, Esq., in 1723; and it has since formed part of the Davenport Estate.

We read of Rowley Mill; but no one seems to know what became of it. It was probably an old mill when the Rowleys entered upon it; but it must have been standing in the early part of the 16th century, because John Walker (son of John Walker, of Rindleford Mill, and grandson of John Walker, of Roughton), who combined the duties of a vicar with the pleasures of a piscator, obtained a license to fish, in 1611, "between the vicarage and Rowley mill, on the payment of 2d., yearly, for life!"

The old mill is gone, but the quaint old home of the family remains, a monument of primitive simplicity and ancient masonry. It is not often that one comes upon such an ancestral home, so quaint, so substantial, and so unaltered during centuries which have passed over it. The present farmhouse is sufficiently venerable and antiquated to excite curiosity; but here, standing opposite, is one still more aged, and one which it is easy to imagine was the origina messuage William Rowley is said to have been in possession of in 1331. It ceased to be a dwelling-house, in all probability, when the one beside it, less like a fortress, and more in character with the times, was built. It may have been then converted into a malthouse; it is now storage-room for lumber, implements, and all conceivable odds and ends. Various conjectures have been indulged in as to its original use, some supposing it to have been a monastic establishment, and others a grange or granary. One generation has punched holes and cut windows in it; others have stopped them up as occasion required or fancy dictated; a few of the original windows remain, mullioned and barred as at first, but so small that no one could put his head through. It has thick nail-studded oak doors; and when arrows and stones, and such-like means of assault alone existed, the place might have stood a siege of some duration. The rooms, and particularly the roof, display such a lavish use of timber as only builders during the early forest periods could command. What a modern house carpenter would technically describe by the

terms: Queen-posts, beams, collar-beams, tie-beams, struts, purliens, and other portions of the roof, are of immense strength and thickness. They need to have been, too, if, as old people say, they had to bear the weight of a roof composed of limestone slabs, such as Wenlock and Buildwas Abbeys were covered with. Mrs. Meredith says that when making their hen-roost out of the end of the building some pieces of oak were found splendidly carved.

The present farmhouse, as I have said, is antiquated enough to satisfy the curious in such matters. It everywhere bears the impress of age, it has evidently been altered and added to; but it always has been what it now is, the residence of a respectable yeoman; and the additions made to it show no pretensions to anything greater; and it has gradually grown to be what it is, by patchings here and there, by sidewalls and gables. Its buttress-like chimneys bulge out into the rooms and taper above the roof into stacks, divided, yet keeping close company with each other. The doors are double planked oak, studded with nails, and fitted with strong bolts and old-fashioned locks. The drawing-room is the best room in the house, and the most modern; it is wainscoted to the ceiling, and the carvings, mouldings, and cornices, are very elaborate in design and workmanship; that on an ornamental shield over the fireplace is beautiful, but not, I should imagine, very old; and unfortunately the whole has been painted over with oil paint, so that not a bit of the original wood can be seen. The cellarage is most curious. There is the wine, the common, and an inner division; with a fireplace, shelves and cupboards for the accommodation of the cellarer, and a socket is left in cutting one of the stones for a candle. The place has the reputation of being haunted; and with so many recesses at the backs of chimneys, behind walls, and under floors, one can imagine it would be by no means difficult in the shadowy twilight, when boughs of trees are sighing, and loose boards and laths are swaying and groaning, to conjure up unearthly sights and sounds. Of one of the representatives of the Rowley family recently deceased at Brighton; of the respectable family of Joynson, who succeeded the Rowleys, now of Manchester and Bridgnorth; and of a remarkably large tithe barn at Rowley; I have not space to speak.

CHAPTER XXVI.

SOND, STABLEFORD, STANMORE GROVE, SWANCOTE, WYKEN, etc.

SOND, a little below Rowley, is a farmhouse in the usual black-and-white livery of former times. Of its antiquity the reader may judge—supposing it to be the house which one of a family of that name possessed in the fourth year of the reign of King Edward III. For twelve generations the family continued in possession, when the line terminated in a heiress, and the lady, Anna Sonde, married Francis Poole, through whom the property descended to Mrs. Pole, still living.

It is not a large house, but it is one well worthy of inspection; if for nothing else, for the more than usual pains taken by the builders in the mouldings and ornamentation of the beams and joists, between which, as in the case of the old mansion at Bromley, the boards of the floor appear without plaster or whitewash. Excepting the boards of the floor, the wood is fresh and of a pale brown colour, not blackened by smoke. The room which is now the large kitchen was, no doubt, the principal one in the house, and the carpenters who planed and prepared the timbers must have been ingenious mechanics, if not something of artists. Leaving Sond (which possibly derives its name from "sond"—as sand is vulgarly pronounced, seeing that it forms the subsoil here), the path which I followed passed through a barley field, in which I noticed a greater profusion than I ever witnessed before of the little blue corn-flower, now so seldom seen except in gardens. The reader will no doubt call to mind chaste and elegant patterns he has seen on old *Serres* china of Louis XIV. and XV. time, in which sprigs of this simple flower are often introduced. It vied with the poppy, its usual companion, and with the pale yellow of the field formed a carpet, bright, varied, and beautiful.

STABLEFORD is a picturesque little township on the river Worfe. But the houses stand either on rocky terraces or at the foot of these ridges, and more in the trough of the valley, a short distance from the Badger woods. Some black and white cottages of very ancient date particularly attract attention, and are nicely kept, the proprietor of the estate taking great care of them. As with the other townships, a family lived here in early times who bore the name of the place. At the Assizes of January, 1272, the Chief Bailiff or Provost of Worfield was Robert de Stapleford (Stableford); his eleven associates being, Stephen de Eyken (Wyken), William de Bradeneye (Bradney), Roger de Cheterton (Chesterton), Boneyt and Thomas de Stanlowe (Stanlow), Roger de Akelinton (Ackleton), and Robert de Atterhull. The Jasper family resided here for several generations. The late Mr. John Jasper was a notable sportsman, and kept a pack of harriers. He was presented with a testimonial in the form of a very handsome cup by those gentlemen who enjoyed hunting with his harriers, which cup is now in the possession of his nephew, Mr. Thomas Smith, of Beaumaris. He had four sisters two of whom died unmarried, of the other two, the one married Mr. Jones, of Bridgnorth, who succeeded Mr. Thomas Devey, as Captain of the Morfe Volunteers, the other married Mr. Smith, a captain in the Army, and had by him one child, the present Mr. Thomas Smith, of Beaumaris, to whom Mr. Jasper left the estate at Stableford, which Mr. Smith sold a few years ago to the late Mr. Chandos Pole, whose widow still resides there, and who is a sister of Mr. Staveley Hill, M.P. for one of the Divisions of Staffordshire. The former residence of the Jasper family, which was of red brick, is still part of the present house, Mr. Smith having added to it. There was formerly a family of the name of Child who resided on their own property at Stableford. The Taylors also, into which family the late Mr. J. Bell Hardwicke's father (of Burcote) married, resided here on their own property. The Misses Eveson reside in a nice old house on the hill, at Stableford; The farm, which has good substantial outbuildings, is in the occupation of Mr. Pugh.

STANMORE GROVE, formerly the residence of R. Pigott, Esq., is now the property of John Pritchard, Esq., D.L., J.P., and

who married Catherine, daughter of the Rev. W. A. Leighton, of

formerly M.P. for Bridgnorth. Mr. Pritchard has entirely rebuilt the house, which now forms an imposing mansion. This township is on the Stourbridge road, two miles from Bridgnorth.

SWANCOTE and Swancote House are the property of the same. The township is situated a mile and half N.E. of Bridgnorth, an two miles S.W. of Worfield village. The house, which occupies a gentle eminence, with pleasure grounds neatly laid out, is in the occupation of William Sing, Esq.

There are other hamlets and places, such as the Folly, on the Stratford or Roman road, about a mile N.W.; Woodside, two and half S.W.; The Low, on the south; Fen Gate; The Roundabout, Gags Bank; Sandyberry; The Ford; and Hartlebury. With regard to Hartlebury, which is a mile and a half from the village, it may be remarked that there is a house round which ivy grows rank, built of unburnt bricks, to evade the oppressive duty formerly levied on such materials.

WYKEN is a small hamlet half a mile on the south side of Worfield village, on the road to Roughton. Wyken House is the residence of Mrs. Clark. The "Wheel o' Worvill," a famous halting place for travellers between Wolverhampton and Bridgnorth, and a well-known resting place for anglers, just at the entrance to Wyken, is kept by Mr. Henry Callant. The other chief tradesmen of the place are, Mr. George Lloyd, whose forge and shoeing establishment is on the east side of the road; and Mr. Edward Boucher, whose wheelwright's yard is on the west side; Mr. James Molineux, farmer; Mr. John Stokes, farmer; and Mr. James Lloyd, are also of Wyken. I may mention that Wyken is a very ancient township, and one where many old Worfield families have lived. One of the Rowley family died here previous to the 6th of Henry VI. Another Daniel Rowley, described of Wyken, Gent., died here September 30th, 1673, and was interred at Worfield, October 2nd, when his sister Margaret became his heir. She settled her estates at Wyken and Dallicote upon William Bache, of Wyken, a relative, and died 1680.

In addition to old families already noticed in connection with Worfield, I may mention the following; "The Whitehills, who

lived for a time at Worfield House, now used as the Vicarage, and well-known in India, France and other parts of the world; their history touching at certain small points such names and families as Talleyrand, Marquis Spinoza, the Pigotts, "Madame Grant" or Le Grand, and others. The reader might be referred for an account of the Whitehills to Blakeway's MSS. in the Bodleian. John Whitehill was sent to restore Lord Pigot to the governship of Madras, and arrived 'by way of Suez,' in the last century." This paragraph I quote from Mr. James's History of Worfield.

Among names not previously given in these pages I may mention the Rev. J. B. Blakeway. Mr. James says: "The Rev J. B. Blakeway, M.A., F.S.A., who died in 1826, was merely the historian of 'Shropshire Parochial Notices,' but he is connected by his volume II. with Worfield parish and people." Mr. James rather underrates this gentleman's abilities; I prefer the opinion expressed by Mr. Pidgeon in his "Handbook to Shrewsbury," where, describing his monument in St. Mary's Church, he says: "his memory will be entitled to an increasing reverence for his learning and profound research as a scholar, antiquary, and historian." Another old Worfield name is Dalicote: William de Dalicote was foreman of a jury in 1274, and Edmund de Dalicote is mentioned in 1333. The name still lives in Dalicote House, on the borders of the two parishes of Worfield and Claverley. I have omitted mentioning the Ridleys, who are large farmers and maltsters at Hoccom.

CHARITIES.—Worfield is rather rich in these. There is the Beech Charity of 1645; or should be. The Bache Charities of £5, and £10; and the Bromley Charity. The Congreve and Crudgington Charities. The Davenport, Devey, and Dolman Charities; also those of Mason, Perry, Rowley, Smith, Lewis, Lloyd, Parker, Wooley, etc.

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JOHN WILKINSON, "FATHER OF THE IRON TRADE."

1/-; *Cloth, boards.*

"Under this title Mr. Randall, a well-known geologist, of Madeley, Salop, has published an interesting sketch of the above local worthy. While much of his information will be fresh to local readers, and much of it valuable as illustrating the character of one of the most remarkable industrial heroes of an illustrious group, we are astonished that so little is comparatively known of his life, although he was contemporary and friend of Boulton, Watt, Dr. Priestly, and other intellectual giants of the time, and lived till the end of the first decade of the present century. Many men yet living can remember something of him—if not from personal acquaintance, at least from hearing him spoken of, and yet some of the most important events of his life are matters of dispute. It is no fault of the author that his work is not more exhaustive than it is. What information he has met with he has laid before his readers in a clear and careful manner; and we recommend the little volume to our readers who are anxious to know something of a great man."—*The Bilston Mercury.*

"Staffordshire is so largely indebted for its wealth and importance to the energy and perseverance of John Wilkinson, that this little book, in which the story of his life and the work which he accomplished are set forth, will commend itself to the notice of Staffordshire men in a special degree. Appropriately enough, the book is dedicated to the Corporation of Wolverhampton, the custodians of an original portrait

of John Wilkinson, a copy of which accompanies the volume. The "Father of the Iron Trade," as John Wilkinson has been termed, was a self-made man, and the story of his early struggles is the old story of difficulties overcome by concentration of purpose and untiring perseverance. He had furnaces at Bradley, near Bilston, but it was in Shropshire that his great achievements were carried out. There, in Willey parish, *the first steam engine* made by Watt at Soho was set to blow the bellows of his ironworks; there, to carry down to the Severn castings from the Coalbrookdale foundry, *the first iron rails* were made; there, to unite two populous districts, called into existence by ironworks in each, the *first iron bridge* ever constructed was built over the Severn at Coalbrookdale; and to carry material manufactured by Wilkinson for the Indian war, *the first iron vessel* was constructed. With such results from his study of it, it is not to be wondered at that John Wilkinson believed thoroughly in iron, and Mr Randall tells us that he never wrote a letter in which he did not mention "iron" either at the beginning, the middle, or the end of it, and that a long time before his death he made an iron coffin for himself, which he kept in his conservatory. Born in 1728, he died at the age of 80, possessed of extensive works and estates, his machinery alone being set down as worth £130,000. During some time spent in France Wilkinson imbibed loose notions with respect to religion and morality, and it may be useful in pointing a moral to state that after his death his vast wealth was lost in litigation between his three illegitimate children, to whom the greater part of his property was devised, and his nephew the heir-at-law. Mr. Randall's book is thoroughly readable, and, apart from its biographical interest, contains much curious information relating to the early history of the iron trade."—*Wolverhampton Chronicle.*

"Mr. J. Randall, F.G.S., of Madeley, Salop, has just issued an instructive and highly-interesting sketch of John Wilkinson, 'the father of the iron trade,' containing original letters and correspondence of 'the great ironmaster.'"—*London Iron Trade Exchange.*

"This little work is one of a series on our coal and iron industries, and men who have wrought in connection with them. Mr. Randall describes how John Wilkinson rose from being the son of a day labourer to the acquisition of great wealth and fame, as maker of engines and builder of iron bridges. He died at the age of eighty years, in July, 1808 and deserves to be had in remembrance as one of the precursors of those men working in the iron industries, who have made English commerce what it is."—*Capital and Labour.*

CLAY INDUSTRIES.

THE CLAY INDUSTRIES, INCLUDING THE FICTILE AND CERAMIC ARTS ON THE BANKS OF THE SEVERN:

One Shilling.

"The author of this most useful and interesting little work is well known in the three counties of Salop, Stafford, and Worcester, as an observant and thoughtful geologist, and as an authority on the geology of the West Midlands. A man who writes with sufficient knowledge

upon some scientific aspect of a locality, or upon the rise and progress of local industries does a good work. People brought up in the midst of such industries as Mr. Randall treats of frequently think they know all about them, and it is not till some man of intelligence, like the author of this little volume, comes forward with his repertory of facts, that they are able to realize their own ignorance. In works of this sort there is often considerable temptation to book-making. Local writers frequently think there is a necessity laid upon them to go back to the very genesis of things; and to mix up scraps of history, science, and literature if they only have the remotest relation to the district and the matter immediately under hand. Mr. Randall, however, is too good a literary workman for this kind of thing. He sticks closely to his subject; he tells what he knows in plain, straightforward unadorned English, and the result is 56 pages of thoroughly interesting and informing matter, cohesive from beginning to end and quite free from scrappiness.—The *Advertiser*.

SHIFNAL AND ITS SURROUNDINGS.

One Shilling.

"It is a complete epitome of the Archæology of the old town. A comprehensive history of the church is given, and many quaint extracts connected with the ancient history of its other institutions, while interesting particulars are collated respecting the "Percy Ballads" and their origin. The old families of the neighbourhood are frequently referred to, and upon the geology of the district Mr. Randall speaks with an authority to which every one will allow that he is entitled. A capital photograph of Shifnal Market Square forms an appropriate frontispiece."—*Wolverhampton Chronicle.*

"It seems to be a most exhaustive compilation of facts connected with the history of Shifnal, and is illustrated both with photographs and several engravings."—*Shrewsbury Chronicle.*

"This is the title of another of Mr Randall's well compiled and interesting works. It is but just published, by the Author and is an excellent sequel to his "Severn Valley," "Old Sports and Sportsmen," &c. Shifnal and its surroundings are "Historically, Topographically, and Geologically considered" in the author's best style.—*Wellington Journal.*

"This little book should find a corner in every household. I contains a view of the town of Shifnal, showing the house where the "Percy Reliques" were found, and with additional view of church, is simply a marvel of cheapness."—*Wenlock and Ludlow Express.*

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